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THE

LIFE

OF

TORQUATO TASSO.

BY

THE REV. R. MILMAN.

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So klammert sich der Schiffer endlich noch
Am Felsen fest, an dem er scheitern sollte.

GOETHE'S TASSO.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.
1850.

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CICOS

LONDON
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

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THE LIFE

OF

TORQUATO TASSO.

CHAPTER I.

IMPRISONMENT CONTINUED—DISAPPOINTMENT.

Tasso had presently a new affliction added to his accumulation of misfortunes. He had expected to secure undying renown; and also to emerge from his state of poverty and distress by the publication of his great poem. He had kept delaying this, in order to bring it to the

greatest possible perfection. He had refused a thousand crowns, which had been offered to him for it by the Cardinal d'Este. He was extremely particular in all things, fastidious, we have observed, even in little personal matters of behaviour, food, dress; and far more so still in all that concerned his writings. He never could polish or finish them highly enough to please himself. He was most anxious that they should never come to light, except in the most correct and perfect form. And in the September of this year (A.D. 1580), he heard that his "Jerusalem Delivered" had been given to the world without his sanction; and in such a condition as might well drive any author mad, much more one of Tasso's character.

Ten cantos entire, the arguments of the eleventh and twelfth in prose, fragments of the four next cantos, with several stanzas rejected by the poet, the whole lamentably incorrect, with numberless mistakes, and omissions, put

hastily and secretly through the press—this was the first edition; such the first appearance of this favourite offspring of his imagination, this production on which so much anxiety and labour had been expended for so many years, to which he had trusted for renown and fortune, which he knew all Italy, if not Europe, was most eagerly expecting.

"If I could adequately," he cried, "be compensated for the loss, what recompense can I obtain which shall equal the affliction?" This unhappy edition was printed in Venice. Celio Malaspina, formerly in the service of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, having obtained possession of those parts of the poem which had been privately submitted to his master's perusal, thus cruelly and unjustly published them without the author's consent. Tasso's anger and grief were very great. He blames most deservedly the negligence of the Grand Duke. He complains of the Venetian govern-

ment for permitting such injustice to be done him.

Celio Malaspina endeavoured to excuse himself for this unrighteous deed, by recounting the urgent persuasions of a multitude of friends, who were anxious to have such a glorious work in their hands. It is needless to observe that such a pretext only increases the offence.

How long and how deeply this calamity was felt by Tasso, is manifest from his exclamations many years afterwards, that he had been as ill-treated by printers as by princes [he could not well say more], and from his complaint in a letter to Maurizio Catanéo, in which he says, "But, after seven years of imprisonment, nine of ill-health, thirty-two of exile—if I should call it so—after a thousand disquietudes, a thousand pains, and the, as it were, continual affliction of seeing my works lacerated, I would, if I could, put

by every other labour which might prevent me from correcting them anew, from perfecting and embellishing them." Still, however, with unexampled fortitude and constancy, he comforts himself under his accumulated trials with his fertile inexhaustible pen. He composed, at this time, that elegant and grave dialogue, the best perhaps of his writings in that class, entitled "The Father of the Family," which I have already mentioned that he wrote within this year, describing his state and condition, and an adventure which he met with in his flight to Turin.

He dedicated this to his great friend Scipio Gonzaga, and sent it to him on the last of September. He set himself next, without intermission, to select and perfect manifold lesser poems, composed by him during the two years of his troubles. He formed them into a volume, directed to the Princesses, with a letter of dedication commending it to them,

"that they might perceive that. neither the cruelty of men, nor his misfortune, could take from him the memory of their worth and merit, or the desire of serving and honouring them."

Perhaps in none of his shorter compositions is there so much power and force. In this volume the sadness of his affliction breathes in the highest strains of poetry. Nature overcomes art, which at other times cramped his genius.

Quis talia fando
Temperet a lacrymis?

Some of these dirges almost equal in grandeur the lines attributed to Homer, lamenting his blindness, or Milton's yet sublimer complaint over his loss of sight, in the "Paradise Lost," or in his famous sonnet. They are free from the bitterness of Byron, while they rival

his forcible declamation. They have even, here and there, the touching pathos of Burns, while one feels that Tasso's calamity was so much less fanciful, and less merited. His afflictions were so various, that sorrow of every kind seems to breathe in his verses.

In another composition, a dialogue on the "Virtues of Women and Ladies," which he wrote at the same time, he again compliments the Princesses. His father, he says, used to commemorate the virtues, active and contemplative, of Rénée of Ferrara, their mother, and of Margaret of Savoy; and now he could testify that Anna, Lucrezia, and Leonora were so well qualified in affairs of state, and in literary acquirements, that no one could listen to them without amazement and astonishment. This was the last public compliment that Tasso could pay to Leonora in her lifetime. She was then very unwell; indeed, she had been ailing and declining for many months, one can hardly

help feeling and saying, from the date of Tasso's imprisonment.

The famous preacher, P. Francesco Panigarola, much celebrated by Tasso's muse, was at this time in Ferrara. He had preached there, during the previous Lent, with great distinction and applause. He was in much favour with Alfonso, though soon afterwards banished by that jealous sovereign, as Ranke has noticed. To him Tasso applied, requesting an interview, trusting that he would be freely admitted to his prison, and entreating him to kiss Madama Leonora's hand for him, and inform her that he was most deeply grieved at her illness, which he had not lamented in verse, from "a certain secret repugnance of his genius;" but that if, in any other way, he could serve her, he was most anxious for her commands, especially if she wished for more cheerful verses.

It is uncertain whether Panigarola fulfilled this commission. Leonora grew worse and

worse, and expired on the 10th of February, A.D. 1581, in the forty-fifth year of her age, it was said, with the greatest resignation and fervour of Christian piety. She died, indeed, almost in the odour of sanctity. A sudden retirement of the waters of the Po, when threatening the city with a flood, had been ascribed to her prayers. The inconsistencies in the distinguished characters of that age are striking. Italian judgments of sanctity are frequently very strange. What her sister Lucrezia became, praised as she also was, what spite and malice she showed after Alfonso's decease, Ranke, among others, has recorded. Leonora seems to have been of a kinder and more affectionate disposition, to have been also devout and charitable. How far her love for Tasso reached, who shall say? Certainly, however, for some years before her death, she seems to have turned sincerely to her preparation for her end. Her image also seems to have re-

mained in Tasso's heart in very mingled colours, partly earthly, partly purer, and more heavenly; as if their friendship had been very different at different times.

There were innumerable elegies poured forth over her death. "Poetic tears" in Italian and Latin, enough to form a book, which was dedicated under that very title to her brother, the Cardinal d'Este. No sigh, however, of Tasso's was heard, no tear of his is recorded. His muse was utterly silent. Often as he had celebrated her before, customary, necessary as it was to pay tributes of verses to the dead, not a line of his remains of regret or of condolence. If her loss was a new and a bitter affliction to him, the walls of the prison alone heard his sighs; its floor alone was bedewed with his tears; the lamentations of his muse were confined to his own heart. Surely the most natural way of accounting for this silence, both during her illness and after her death, is, that anything

except silence would have been dangerous and ruinous. Had Tasso been offended with her for not obtaining his liberty, as Serassi hints, he might have neglected to flatter her while alive; but as it is altogether foreign to his character, it would also have been directly opposed to his interests, to have shewn indignation or neglect when she was dead. "The silent repugnance of his genius," by which he excused himself for not condoling with her in her sickness, and which remained after her death, by the very strangeness of the expression, and extraordinary character of the excuse, appears intended to hint a reason to her, of which she was well aware, but which could not be uttered in words. And what could this reason be, except that he was forbidden, or that it was unsafe to write of her.

Serassi's idea excites indignation. It seems marvellous that one who understood Tasso and his character so well, should be so biassed by

his wish to compliment the Austrian House descended from the d'Este, as to assign such bitter and unnatural feelings as the causes of Tasso's silence. He does not indeed absolutely assert this. "Perhaps," he says, "it may be so, unless, overwhelmed with greater calamities, which pierced him with livelier sorrow, he could find no room for a new grief!" As if there were not such a thing as grief too deep for utterance; or as if he had never dreamed of the possibility that Alfonso would be rendered more cruel and implacable by any new testimonies of Tasso's attachment.

His observation, indeed, is so far true, that Tasso had calamities enough. "Since to the weariness and inconveniences of his prison were added the despair of deliverance, the weakness and ill-health contracted by so many unhappy misfortunes, and above all, the disappointment of seeing his "Jerusalem" so misused, and the loss of all those advantages and gains which he

had reasonably expected, but which were now torn from him for ever by the avarice and dishonesty of its publishers." This is a remarkable confession of Serassi's, for elsewhere he makes light of the circumstances of his imprisonment. In his anxiety to do away with one questionable report, that of Tasso's affection for Leonora, he establishes unawares the other report, which he labours to discredit, of Alfonso's cruelty toward his victim. Montaigne, who visited Ferrara not long before this time, in the November namely of A.D. 1580, confirms the discomforts and neglect to which the poor poet was exposed. "I had even more indignation," he says, "than compassion, when I saw him at Ferrara in so piteous an estate, a living shadow of himself, forgetful of himself and of his works."

It is plain that Tasso was at times made a show of, and apparently among the lunatics of the asylum, as one of their company, and

that his treatment was as bad as that of the meanest among them. Meanwhile, the printers and publishers were contending with one another, who should best profit by the poor prisoner's spoils. Friends and enemies alike entered the arena, some for gain, some from ambition, some from admiration and affection, some from pity and regret that so grand a production should be so marred in its appearance.

The next, and first entire publication of the poem was owing to the diligence of Angelo Ingegneri, who had befriended Tasso at Turin. He had transcribed in six nights, with his own hand, a copy of the poem, corrected by Tasso himself, which had accidentally come into his possession; and was intending, with the assistance of some celebrated friends, to bring out a splendid edition with annotations, arguments, tables of reference, and engravings. But seeing that wretched fragment of the poem published

in so miserable a form at Venice, he hastened to produce a more complete work. He published two editions of the "Jerusalem" simultaneously, one at Parma, the other at Casalmaggiore, both of which were sadly incorrect, though containing the entire poem. The first of these two, however, is reckoned a very beautiful specimen of typography

Celio Malaspina, unwilling to be outdone, immediately obtained an entire copy, and published a fourth edition at Venice, with arguments and allegories to each canto, and two copious indexes. This edition was reprinted with some improvements the following year. A discourse, by Filippo Pigafetta, was prefixed to it, in which he prays every noble spirit to exculpate the author, should any little defects or blemishes appear in his work, since he could not revise it, or put the last touch to it; till cruel fortune should change

his unhappy condition, and restore the great poet to the world, in which, should it come to pass, men would be under eternal obligation to the great liberality and magnificence of the Duke of Ferrara; who, following the footsteps of his predecessors, true Mecenasses of the muses, is continually endeavouring his recovery with all possible affection and diligence. Compare this assertion with Montaigne's observations, and we perceive the rumour carefully inculcated, that Tasso was mad, and that the Duke kept him confined out of kindness and in order to cure him. We have seen what kindness he met with, and how much attention the Duke and his officers really paid to the health and welfare of his soul and body, for which it was given out that they were so anxious.

Before Ingegneri's edition was published, Guarini, Tasso's friendly rival, grieved and indignant at the wretched Venetian impression

of the "Jerusalem," had been labouring diligently to correct its errors, and fill up its omissions, adding the six deficient cantos in his own handwriting. The effect of his industry was anticipated by Ingegneri's publication. Nevertheless, with the assistance of this copy of Guarini's, and perhaps after consultations in some instances with the author himself, Febò Bonna published a fifth edition at Ferrara, with Tasso's own allegory of the poem at the end, then first produced.

This allegory, as is well known, was happily not written or imagined till the composition of the poem was finished. Tasso seems, as I have noticed, to have begun it partly in sport, partly under fear of the Inquisition, and with a wish to justify himself for the lighter portions of his verse. As he went on with it, he grew more earnest; and, at last, seriously persuaded himself that the allegory and the moral which it contains were the chief object of his muse. As

he says, after Lucretius, at the opening of his poem :

> Cosi al egro fanciul porgiamo aspersi
> Di soave licor, gli orli del vaso ;
> Succhi amari ingannato in tanto ei beve ;
> E dal inganno suo vita riceve.

"Heroic poetry," he begins, "like an animal in which two natures are united, is composed of two parts—imitation and allegory. With the former it attracts and delights the minds and ears of men, with the latter instructs them in virtue, or in knowledge, or in both. Epic imitation, therefore, is nothing more than a representation of human action. The allegory of epic poets is a figure of human life. Imitation regards the outward affairs of men, and sets them forth with as much liveliness and distinctness as is possible. Allegory, on the contrary, is busied with the internal world. Man has a double life. We figure both to

ourselves. Sometimes by man we mean a being composed of body, soul, and mind; and then life signifies the existence proper to such a compound, and its perfection will consist in the complete co-operation of every part in due order. Sometimes, though more rarely, we intend by man, not that compound being, but only his noblest part—that is, his mind; and then life will signify contemplation, which is the highest operation of the mind, partaking of divinity, and transforming us into angels.

Of this contemplative life, the "Comedia" of Dante and the "Odyssey" are figures, almost from first to last. Civil life, on the contrary, is shadowed forth in the whole "Iliad" and also in the "Eneid," though in this latter poem there is a mixture of action and contemplation. Now the contemplative man is solitary, the active a member of society. Hence Dante, and Ulysses on his departure from Calypso, move alone; while Agamemnon and Achilles are

represented, the one as general of the Grecian host, the other of many troops of myrmidons. Eneas also, in wars and civil affairs, has his companions with him. When he visits the infernal regions, or the Elysian fields, he leaves them behind, or has only a shadow in Achates. And it is with reason that he travels by himself on the solemn journey, since it pictures the contemplation of future rewards and punishments. Furthermore, the operation of the mind in contemplation is that of a single faculty, the speculative intellect. In political operations, many subordinate faculties join in. Wherefore the allegory of the poem is as follows.

The army, composed of different princes and various Christian soldiers, signifies man, who is composed of soul and body, and a soul not simple, but distinguished into many various faculties. Jerusalem, a city, strong, and situated in a rough and mountainous region, the aim

of all the labours of the Christian force, denotes civil happiness, which, however, can belong only to the good Christian. Godfrey, captain of this assemblage, signifies the Understanding, especially the moral or political Understanding; and he is chosen to be captain by God and the princes, since the Understanding is set by nature over all the other powers. Rinaldo, Tancredi, and the other princes, are the remaining faculties of the mind. The common soldiers express the body. And since there are difficulties in reaching the proposed end, from man's imperfection and the adversary's arts, these are represented under poetical images.

The death of Sueno and his companions, killed far away from the camp, typify losses of earthly advantages—the armies of Africa and Asia—the assaults of fortune. As to internal impediments, Tancredi's vain chase, and Rinaldo's anger, signify the opposition of concupiscence and resentment to reason. The

demons are both figures, and also figured forth as their own representatives, opposing our attainment of civil happiness, as a step toward Christian blessedness. The two magicians, Ismeno and Armida, ministers of the devil to withdraw the Christians from the war, denote the two powers of our soul, from which all sins spring. Armida is the temptation which beguiles the appetite; Ismeno, the temptation which assails the judgment, and entices it toward false doctrine. His enchantments in the wood are the arguments of error; and, because man follows vice and flees from virtue, either esteeming pains and perils intolerable, or judging happiness, as Epicurus, to lie in ease and pleasures, the enchantment and delusion are twofold. The fire, the whirlwind, the darkness, the monsters, are the deceitful reasonings which represent the labours and dangers of virtue as evil. The flowers, fountains, birds, musical instruments, and nymphs, are the false

syllogisms which set forth sensual luxuries and delights as good.

I have said enough of the difficulties we experience from without, and from within. Let us proceed to the external and internal succours, wherewith the political man surmounts every difficulty, and reaches the desired happiness. The Diamond Shield, which covers Raimond, and is employed to protect Godfrey, signifies the particular deliverance of Divine Providence. The Angels denote now the Divine assistance, now Divine inspirations, which are also shadowed forth in the dream of Godfrey, and the narrative of the Hermit. He signifies the grace of supernatural knowledge. The Sage, to whom he sends the Messengers, represents human wisdom. He was converted by the Hermit, as the philosophy of the Gentiles, once presumptuous, and godless, has been by St. Thomas, and other holy doctors, reduced into

the modest, humble handmaid of theology. The Sage can only be found by the instructions of the Hermit, signifying that God's supernatural grace generally works by natural instruments. And to Godfrey, with reason are vouchsafed communications, and graces withheld from the rest, as he exceeds the rest in piety, and is the figure of the understanding.

Human wisdom then, thus guided by a superior power, delivers the sensual soul from vice, and engrafts in it moral virtue. But because this is still insufficient, Peter the Hermit confesses Godfrey and Rinaldo, as he had before converted Tancredi. But as Rinaldo is one of the two principal characters of the poem, it may please the reader that I should explain, at some length, the allegorical meaning veiled in his conduct.

Godfrey, who fills the first place in the story,

is, as has been said, the Understanding. This the poem often expresses, as in the verse:

Thou sway'st the mind, the sceptre, thou alone.

and more clearly in another:

Thy spirit is the army's mind and life.

Rinaldo, who holds the second place in the action of the poem, and should be placed accordingly in the allegory, would signify the second power of the soul. This is the faculty of Resentment, of which Plato doubts whether it differs from Reason or not. Its duty is like a mighty warrior to arm itself on Reason's side against the lusts; and with that vehemence and ferocity which belong to it, to repel, disperse, and destroy every impediment in the way of happiness. But since this faculty is sometimes disobedient to reason, and gives way to its own proper impulses, it combats at times, not against, but for the lusts, like a watch-dog

turning upon the herds, instead of the robbers. This impetuous quality is represented chiefly in Rinaldo, as he signifies, speaking of himself,

Anger, the reason's ardent champion,

who while combatting Gernando, overpasses the bounds of political revenge, and while he serves Armida, represents Anger untamed by Reason; but when he disenchants the wood, storms the city, and routs the hostile army, represents it under Reason's government. His return and reconciliation with Godfrey depicture accordingly the proper subordination of Resentment to Reason. Godfrey's vain endeavours to seize the enchanted wood without Rinaldo, inculcate the necessity of the Reason's using the co-operation of the Resentment, as the head uses the right hand.

To conclude, the army to which Rinaldo and all the other cavaliers are restored by

Divine grace and human prudence, and made obedient to its captain, signifies man brought into the state of natural righteousness, when the superior powers command as they ought, and the inferior obey; and further again, into the state of obedience to God. Immediately the wood is easily disenchanted, and the hostile army discomfited; that is, having overcome all external impediments, man arrives at political happiness. But civil blessedness should not be the ultimate aim of a Christian man who should look higher, namely, at Christian happiness. Therefore Godfrey desires not the capture of the earthly Jerusalem simply to acquire temporal dominion; but in order that Divine worship may be celebrated in it, and the sepulchre be freely visited by pious and devout pilgrims; shewing us that the Understanding, weary with political business, should finally rest in prayer and contemplation of the joys of the life to come, most blessed and immortal."

Such was the ingenious attempt of Tasso to turn his "Jerusalem" into lectures on moral philosophy; happily, I repeat, undertaken after the poem was completed.

As there were several errors yet, and as the arguments composed for a previous edition were wanting in the fifth edition at Ferrara, a new and more correct edition still, the sixth in number, was without delay published in that city. This was the first, which could be called a perfect copy of the work. Three months later, however, a very fine, and far better edition was produced in Parma; such as seemed at length to leave nothing further to be desired in the appearance of this incomparable poem.

There had been also an edition previously published in France. Thus in the space of six months, the "Jerusalem" was reprinted seven times; six times in Italy, and once in France. Within three months more it was

again reprinted; this was the last edition mentioned, that in Parma. And there the publisher writes, that he had intended to have appended a "Rimario" of all the rhymes, and a brief history of Jerusalem, with extracts from the various authors employed by the poet; but as this was a work of time, and the poem was asked for with the greatest urgency every day, he was obliged to produce it as he could.

It seems, I have remarked, that as in the case of the "Orlando Furioso," the whole of Italy, not to say foreign countries also, had long been in an agony of expectation for the "Jerusalem." As soon as it came out, the demand was prodigious. It was impossible to meet it. Two thousand copies of Ingegneri's edition were sold in a day or two. Every where, all over the whole country, nothing was to be heard but "Tasso's echoes." The shepherd read it as he watched by his flocks on the ridgy Apennine.

The boatman, rocking in the Campanian gulf, hung over the verse of his exiled compatriot. The gondolier, waiting at the Venetian bridges, whiled away the hours with learning the stately and liquid stanzas. The brigand, lurking behind the rock, in the wild passes of the Abruzzi, laid by his matchlock for the strains of love and valour. The merchant, in the inn, ceased thinking over his ships, and the shopkeeper forgot his business, in the gardens of Armida, or the enchanted forest. The prelate and the monk hurried with the book into their cells, to visit in its pages the sacred walls, and holy buildings of Jerusalem. The brave cavalier, and fair maiden, admired the knightly feats, or wept over the tender sorrows of the champions and their ladies, in hall or in shady bower. The scholar, to whom the work had been in part submitted, rushed eagerly to see how his criticisms had told. Nobles and princes, and their stately dames, in addition to the interest of the poem,

desired to see the verse of the famous object of princely love, and princely hate. The French knights panted to see their progenitors' deeds of pious valour blazoned anew to the world in the burning words of song.

City, country, valley, mountain, shop, hall, bower, palace, convent, rang and resounded with the strains of the "Jerusalem." Fortunes were made by its sale. Men could not praise it enough. Meanwhile, the author himself was languishing in a dim, uncomfortable prison; the fit companion, it was said, of lunatics, weak in body, sick in heart, a sport of servants, a show to travellers, deprived of every convenience of life, harassed with the wild sounds of a mad-house, "enough to make the most sane mad," with the fear of life-long imprisonment before him, with scanty supplies of food and raiment, receiving now and then a few crowns in charity, or a change or two of linen from some timid friend, the rumours of his fame in the world

without to tantalize him, and the hope of ease and competence melting fast away for ever before the injustice and avarice of men; reduced to petition with the humblest supplications for the intercession of the Duke's steward, or favourite mistress, or of Lucrezia's dwarf.

Such was Tasso's condition up to the end of A.D. 1580, and such the treatment which he desired should be represented to Alfonso, who, he believed, did not know in what way he was dealt with. At the close of this year, probably in consequence of those secret intercessions, the misery of his situation was a little alleviated. He was removed to a somewhat better apartment in the hospital, to which another was afterwards added, large enough, he says, to walk in and philosophize. Like most authors and poets, he seems to have been fond of pacing up and down his room when composing.

In the spring of A.D. 1581, he was visited again by the Prince Vincenzo Gonzaga, and

by Scipio Gonzaga, his great friend. He began, consequently, to entertain hopes that his liberation was at hand. He presented the young Prince on this visit with a written copy of this dialogue on "Nobility," to which, at the time, he was adding a second on "Dignity," by way of complement. This he sent afterwards to Scipio Gonzaga, as an offering of friendship, on his being created Patriarch of Jerusalem by Sixtus V. This dialogue on "Nobility," as usual, was cruelly published, without Tasso's privacy, about a month afterwards at Vicenza. The other was not published till long subsequently.

His hopes of freedom were further strengthened by a letter from Maurizio Cataneo, Secretary to Cardinal Albano, at Rome, giving him several encouraging assurances from his master, and urging him, above all things, to speak and write of Duke Alfonso with greater respect. His complaints, we may suppose, that

he was as ill-treated by printers, as by princes, had been divulged, and reported far and wide. He received also a very kind letter, at the same time, from his sister Cornelia, informing him that she had just contracted a second marriage; her husband was Ferrante Speziano, a noble and rich cavalier, who, with her, gave Tasso pressing invitations to come to them at Naples, and try if he could recover his maternal inheritance. Cataneo also informed him, in another letter, of the renown which his poem had attained, especially in Rome, and implored him to complete his tragedy ("Il Torrismondo,") which the world was now waiting for in anxious expectation.

In reply to these letters, Tasso, after congratulating his sister on her marriage, beseeches her, with her husband, to employ all the means in their power to accelerate his release, that "he might live as he had been used to do, and attend to his studies, and complete his works." He makes the same request to

Cardinal Albano, promising, from his own inclination, as well as at Cataneo's advice, to speak and write most honourably of Alfonso.

"As to the tragedy," he says, "I neither refuse, nor yet resolve to finish it. Compositions of a sad character are apt to disturb the mind; and I, who am melancholy by nature, and by fortune, ought to try and live cheerfully, as your lordship exhorts, so far as I can without doing anything contrary to the honour of my age and profession."

He had also courteous greetings from the Duchess of Urbino, and promises that she would obtain his liberty from her brother. Probably now that Leonora was dead, she had great hopes of accomplishing this object. Marfisa d'Este, likewise, the Duke's cousin, lately married to the Marquis, afterwards Prince, of Massa and Carrara, enraptured with Tasso's poem, sent her secretary with the kindest messages imaginable, informing him that she

had already obtained permission for him to visit her at her villa of Madaler for a day, with the strictest stipulations, however, that one of the Duke's gentlemen should escort him, and that he should be conveyed in a carriage from and back to Santa Anna.

In the Marchioness's villa, besides herself, he met two other ladies, Ginevra Muzia and the celebrated Tarquinia Molza. Here he refreshed himself with some deep discussions on the usual subject of love, with these noble, and learned, and graceful companions, which he afterwards perpetuated in a dialogue entitled "La Molza, or of Love." His hand also speedily wove new wreaths of poetry and thankfulness for his kind and compassionate friends in return for their earnest sympathy. The June sky, the breath of the air, the pleasant conversation of these really excellent ladies, fell like a gleam of sunlight on poor Tasso, though his jealous prison gates soon closed on him again.

He was also further comforted by a present of fifty crowns from Ferrante Gonzaga, Lord of Guastalla, and Prince of Molfetta, a good scholar himself, and a great patron of the literary characters of the age.

This seasonable supply relieved him for awhile from the wretchedness and degradation to which he had been reduced. His hopes also from the Cardinal Albano increased, and he proposed to himself to recover his health and strength in his parental home, Bergamo. No change, however, occurred; his hopes were baffled; his imprisonment continued. His little supplies were probably soon again exhausted. His health naturally grew worse. Aldo, who visited him in September, A.D. 1582, depicted his condition in sad and painful colours. He saw "poor Tasso in a pitiable state, not as touching his senses, which, after a long conversation he was convinced he had perfectly sound and entire, but on account of the nakedness

and hunger which he suffered in his prison, and his loss of liberty." His sanity is confirmed somewhat later by Muzio Manfrede, who, writing to Ferrante Gonzaga, says of him, "he kisses your Highness' hands, and is thoroughly in his senses—ed è assai in cervello."

Serassi questions most of the relations which describe Tasso's condition as so miserable, but without any authority whatsoever. And surely these incidental accounts of eye-witnesses of all sorts and classes, and almost all of them perfectly trustworthy, cannot be reasonably doubted, bearing out, as they do, the lamentations of Tasso himself, and even representing his state in worse lineaments than he does.

Still this dull squalid apartment in a madhouse was the keblah, as it were, of the eyes of all Italy, we might almost say, all Europe. Crowds of pilgrims, all to whom the muses were dear, or learning precious, or who valued noble pæans of warlike achievements, or tender melodies of

love, or sacred and solemn strains of devotion, printers also, and painters, and scholars, and divines of every rank and country, now that access, as it seems, was more readily allowed, thronged to behold, to admire, to pity, to consult, to be instructed, by this poor, sick, and melancholy prisoner; and now and then to make him what offerings of tenderness or admiration he was permitted to accept.

The younger Aldo, (he was the grandson of the original and most famous Aldo,) had published some of Tasso's lesser poetical and prose writings in the previous year. They were beautifully printed, but extremely incorrect. This year he published a new impression, with a second part, but, if possible, more incorrect still. Guarini, having a poet's fellow-feeling for this injury to his rival's muse, exerted himself with the utmost diligence and carefulness to bring out in a suitable form a fair and accurate selection of his lesser poetry. He also did

a yet kinder act. He omitted some poems, or occasionally some parts. He altered the titles and addresses of others, which might have led to dangerous discoveries. He had no personal intercourse with Tasso. The business was transacted through Ippolito Gianduca, a Ferrarese gentleman. Tasso seems, however, to have most thankfully committed the work to Guarini, as he directs their intermediate messenger to "withdraw some verses, if these last triplets would rather please the Signor Guarini in this fashion."

There were good reasons for this careful examination of Tasso's poetry, for these corrections, alterations, and omissions, besides the imperfection of the former publications. The poet was compromised, as we have observed, by many of these verses, with regard to that daring affection which drew on him his imprisonment. It was really, therefore, a most kind and friendly work which Guarini under-

took, and violent and quarrelsome as his nature was, and rival as he had been to Tasso in earlier days, it shows a chivalrous and compassionate heart, that he should be so anxious both for his reputation and his safety. It does not appear that Guarini owned this work at the time, but afterwards complaining of some typographical errors in a tragi-comedy of his own, he describes them to be such as he could not bear in other men's works, as, "for instance, in the 'Rime' of Signor Tasso, corrected by me out of compassion alone, and printed in Ferrara several years ago." This selection of Tasso's poetry was dedicated to the Duchess of Urbino.

Comparing these compassionate acts of Guarini, and the compliment which Tasso pays him in the "Messaggero," there seems every reason to think that whatsoever jealousies there may have been between them, they were not sufficient by any means to destroy their friendship; and it is pleasant to see two, even of

the "genus irritabile," performing mutually these kind offices one toward the other.

Before long, Aldo came to have a personal interview with Tasso, who, from the gratitude justly due from all authors and poets to such distinguished printers and publishers (not to add scholars), as his present visitor, his father, and his grandfather, received him with the greatest courtesy and distinction, and readily complied with his request to furnish a Sonnet for the Life of Cosmo de' Medici, which he was writing. In answer to a second entreaty, that he would give him some of his compositions to publish, which he engaged to print as beautifully as possible, Tasso promised, if he could, to correct and finish some pieces, and transmit them to Venice on the first convenient opportunity. Two days were spent by Aldo in Ferrara, of which the greater part was devoted to the prisons of Santa Anna.

About this time, amongst innumerable others,

a letter came from Orazio Lombardelli of Siena, congratulating Tasso on the excellence and fame of his poem, and enumerating a multitude of authors who were celebrating it, either with their voice or their pen, reading it publicly or in private, others representing parts of it on the stage, others commentating and making notes, and observations upon it. Then arrived Francesco Terzi, a celebrated painter and engraver of Bergamo, desirous of making Tasso's acquaintance, and of consulting him on a work in which he was engaged. The poet received him as an artist and a compatriot, with more than his usual kindness, and was ready with the suggestions desired. The following day Terzi presented him with a large volume of engravings of all the House of Austria, "a stupendous and excellent work."

Then Bernardo Giunti, a rich Venetian printer, sent him several copies of a volume of his own prose writings, beautifully printed, as

a tribute of admiration, requesting at the same time a supply of new compositions from Tasso, that he might publish them in the same shape. Tasso gave him leave to use any writings of his which might be in his possession. "But my works," he says, "which you have printed, have not only been composed by one in the midst of many discomforts and interruptions, but have also issued from my hands without consideration, and in the greatest possible haste; so that it has given me very much pain to see them printed."

He asks, in conclusion, for some books of Dante's, his "Volgare Eloquenza," and "Vita Nuova," and "Treatise on a Monarchy." To Aldo, who had written to press him for the promised works, he answered on the same day that he wrote to Giunti, engaging that after the Feast, viz., Christmas, he would have the "Dialogue on Virtuous Pleasure," copied out and sent off. His "Rime" he cannot transmit so soon, "be-

cause, besides those already printed, I have about two hundred sonnets, which cannot be written out by any one except myself, and many of which need manifold corrections, as indeed do many of the printed also."* He also proposes to change their arrangement, and promises arguments to all of them; "no slight work," he says, "but requiring at least two months' labour." Again and again, it is impossible to help wondering at his fortitude and industry in circumstances under which most men would have sunk into despair and inactivity. Not without reason may he claim, as he does in two or three sonnets, the praise at least of constancy.

Soon afterwards, in the beginning of A.D. 1583, the fourth year of his captivity, he was visited on the part of Ferrante Gonzaga, by Muzio Manfrede, a poet and literary character of great renown, the author of the tragedy of "Semiramide," reckoned by some second among Italian

* Tasso's handwriting was dreadful.

tragedies to Tasso's "Torrismondo" before Alfieri appeared.

Next came a young man, Giulio Segni, from Bologna, with an introduction from Tasso's old master and friend Papio, professor of law in that city. He could not hasten quick enough for his impatience to the hospital of Santa Anna; but as soon as he entered the poet's presence, struck dumb with awe and reverence, he could not even utter a word, much less show him some writings of his own, which he was anxious to present to his notice. He found courage to do so at a subsequent interview. Then arrived two from Genoa, Giulio Guastavini, a famous philosophical physician, and Bernardo Castello, a painter and engraver, distinguished afterwards as the inventor of three different sets of historical illustrations for Tasso's poem. He brought some of these with him, much to Tasso's satisfaction, and also presented him with a picture of the Saviour painted by himself, to

which Tasso composed a sonnet, valuing it very highly, and carefully preserving it by him till his death.

Castello seems to have found Tasso in better circumstances than usual; Guastavini, on the other hand, who came a little later, found him weak, and scarcely able to utter a word. He declares that the wretched and pitiable state in which this divine immortal genius lay in that prison of his, drew tears from every one's eyes; and "whoever," he adds, "saw him as I did, "can bear clear witness." There is a story that Guastavini found Torquato on a high tower, speculating and composing, and that when he asked him what he was engaged in, he replied:

I think, and then re-think, and thinking madden.*

This, however, does not at all agree with Guastavini's own account, or with Tasso's circumstances, much less with his gravity and decorum; unless, indeed, the "tower" be only

* Penso e ripenso, e nel pensare impazzo.

a Lucretian metaphor for contemplation, and the words an outburst of natural indignation.

Soon after Tasso had first a letter, and then a visit, from one to whose friendship he was afterwards indebted for far more serious benefits: for advice and support during the remaining years of his imprisonment, and in a great measure for his final release. This was father Angelo Grillo, a monk of Monte Cassino, a not inconsiderable philosopher, poet, and theologian. He came to Tasso's assistance just in time. Had it not been for his seasonable and affectionate offices, it is not impossible that Tasso might have sunk under his prolonged afflictions and repeated disappointments. He first sent a letter from one of the Benedictine monasteries in Brescia, together with two sonnets, by Zaniboni, a monk of his congregation, expressing his admiration and affection, and a fervent hope that he would soon be able to wait on him

in person. Tasso showed in his answer how deeply he felt this kindness, and how much he desired the realization of this hope. He was ever most affectionately disposed toward all the Benedictine brotherhood. He had happy recollections of having, often in childhood, visited their celebrated monastery of Cava, where the good abbots had caressed and praised him. St. Benedict indeed was, as we shall see, one of the protectors, whom Tasso afterwards imagined that he beheld in his visions. He replied also with two sonnets, in one of which he plays on the name of Angelo, trusting that the father will act the angelic part of helping and counselling him. In the other, which is very grave and touching, he laments how all his labours were still unprofitable to himself.

I sowed, another reaps. I water, lo!
A noble plant, a not unworthy swain.
Others the fruit receive, and me disdain.
And in my heart, for fear, I hide the woe.

I bear the load; the watery deep I plough;
The profits others gather.

These touching sounds vibrated powerfully on the kindly heartstrings of the learned monk. Each hour, he tells us, seemed a thousand years, which intervened before he could pay the promised visit. He hurried to Ferrara, and rushed to Santa Anna. He could not tear himself from the cell before nightfall. He obtained leave from Alfonso to visit Tasso as often as he wished; and whenever he was at Ferrara, he in general spent every day, and all day in the hospital, to the infinite satisfaction and profit of himself and the poor prisoner. And whenever he was unable to be at Ferrara, he commissioned his former messenger, Zaniboni, to visit the poet as often as possible, to watch over his interests, to prevent him from being overwhelmed with importunate intrusions; to make him presents from time to time, when he had the power;

to look after his health, and to serve him in every way that he could. "The worth of Tasso," he says, "and still more his imprisonment, drew me very frequently to Ferrara, to enjoy the one, and to console the other." He also set himself to seek and use every possible means of furthering his liberation.

About this time, Vasalini, a printer of Ferrara, brought out at Venice the third part of Tasso's minor poems and prose writings, corrected and improved by the poet's own hand—such still was his indefatigable industry. In one of these, the "Dialogue on Virtuous pleasure," he was thought by the Florentine ambassador at the d'Este Court, to reflect on the government of the Medici, and absurdly accused by him before his sovereign. He, however, had more sense than his minister; and instead of resenting the imagined affront, sent Tasso many courteous assurances of affection and esteem. The Grand-Duchess also

sent at the same time a very useful present of money, for which he returned his grateful acknowledgments. This anecdote shows, however, the pride and malice of the courtiers.

Tasso had borne up for more than four years; at length, in the summer of A.D. 1583, the fifth year of his imprisonment, his health, always delicate, began to give way more and more; at least he thought himself becoming much worse. The want of proper treatment and proper medicines, the weariness of his confinement, the disappointment of his hopes, produced their natural effect. It is wonderful they did not do so sooner. He wrote to a celebrated physician, professor of medicine at Padua, always celebrated for its medical science, describing the symptoms of his disorder, and requesting his prescriptions and instructions. "It is many years," he says, "since I have been unwell; and what my complaint is, I know not.

Nevertheless, I certainly judge myself to be ill. But whatsoever is the cause of my disorder, its effects are these; intestinal pain, with somewhat of a flux of blood, ringings in the ears and head; sometimes so strong, that it seems to me as if there were in it one of those clocks which strike; unceasing mental images of different kinds, but all painful, which disturb me, so that I cannot apply my mind to my studies for five minutes together. And the more I force myself to attend, the more I am distracted with those changing apparitions, and sometimes with most violent disgusts, rising up in me according to the various fancies which present themselves. Besides this, after eating, my head fumes and burns; and in all the sounds which I hear, I keep imagining a human voice, so that it very often seems as if inanimate things were speaking to me.

"By night I am troubled with manifold

dreams, and sometimes I have been so carried away by my imagination, that I seem to have heard things, though I would not affirm this for certain, about which I have conferred with Father Francesco Marco, a Capuchin, the bearer of this letter, and other priests and laymen, with whom I have discussed my complaint. Being not only severe, but disagreeable beyond measure, it requires some powerful remedy. And though no better remedy can be expected than that which comes from the grace of God, who never abandons one that firmly believes in Him, nevertheless as he allows us by His divine mercy, to employ, as men, human remedies, I now have recourse to you for advice and assistance. If you cannot send me medicines frequently, nevertheless I beseech you, give me your opinion, which I would far sooner attend to than that of most others.

"Sir, the greater my need, and the greater

my distress, the greater will be my obligation toward you, if I recover my health by your means. And although not only as regards my disorder, but in all other respects, I may say that I am indeed in as bad a state as possible, nevertheless, by the grace of our Lord, so much of my customary genius is yet left, that I am not hitherto disabled from composing, and in this kind of payment, you may expect all gratitude from me; and if there is any reward which you can or ought to require of me, it is this: which shall never be asked for in vain, but, on the contrary, be often payed without being asked for at all." He begs him also to consult with other physicians at Padua about his case.

Il Mercuriale, so was the professor called, readily complied with Tasso's request. He prescribed for him a cautery in the leg, total abstinence from wine, and continual broths and gruels. Tasso was very ready to ask advice,

but not so ready to adopt the prescribed remedies. He remonstrates very earnestly against the cautery in the leg, the total abstinence, and the continual gruellings. A mixture or conserve, which the doctor recommended, he was very willing to use, and also to follow one or two other rules which he did not prescribe. And he concludes with beseeching his correspondent to remember, that the excellence of doctors consists in giving, not only wholesome, but pleasant remedies. "I therefore beg to remind," he adds, "Signor Mercuriale that I eat with a good appetite, (he seems very earnest against the broth and abstinence), but am otherwise very uncomfortable."

His disorder appears to come more from the prison and the mind, than from any real illness. This is indeed by no means to be wondered at. The wonder is, that his health and mind held out as they did.

Whether it was fortunate or unfortunate that he did not obey the prescriptions which he asked for, I am not competent to decide. One may venture, however, to surmise, that it was rather fortunate than otherwise.

That no sort of trouble, however odd and strange, might be wanting to Tasso, after the affliction given him by the blanks, and imperfections, and alterations, with which his great poem had been presented to the world, an impudent pretender must needs add five cantos of his own, and publish it with this new inharmonious appendage. The poet's friends were indignant. He took the affront more patiently, and only complained of being called by him a Siren; "for to be compared to a Siren, is a sting all the sharper for being so unsuitable. If all things should be judged by the intention, mine was not bad, nor different from that of physicians, (according to the so often repeated image), who rub the

mouth of the cup, in which they give their medicines, with honey." The story, therefore, that Tasso was very indignant, and obtained permission to go to Venice express, for the purpose of challenging Camilli, (the pretender), and that this poor would-be bard, fearing so renowned a swordsman, and perhaps conscience-stricken at the enormity of his fault, suffered himself to be well beaten, rather than fight, seems altogether an imagination, as so many of the stories concerning Tasso appear to be. For he was at that time shut up in his prison, and enduring the agonies of protracted hopes and perpetual disappointments. The remainder of this year he seems not to have been able to exert himself as usual.

In the following year (A.D. 1584) his hopes revived again: Angelo Grillo, his excellent and unwearied friend, made such interest with Cardinal Albano and Leonora of Austria,

Duchess of Mantua, Alfonso's mother-in-law, that they renewed their exertions with fresh zeal to persuade the Duke to release him. One day Alfonso called him into his presence, and before several noble cavaliers, both of Italy and France, promised that before long he would set him at liberty. He was also permitted to visit several convents and churches, to confess and attend mass; also to accept now and then the invitations of private friends, both gentlemen and ladies. During the Carnival, for instance, of this year, he was spectator of the joustings and tournaments, the revels and maskings customary at that season, from the house of Ippolito Gianluca, who seems, indeed, to have been a kind of friendly guardian, directed most likely by the Duke, to watch over and be responsible for Tasso, whenever he left his prison; for in all these visits, he was carefully carried out and back in one of

the Duke's carriages, and all opportunities of escape were diligently guarded against.

These renewed expectations of freedom, so strong that he was writing to Rome about arrangements for a visit thither, these agreeable conversations, and lively spectacles, and more especially these religious exercises, which were now the best relief to Tasso's mind, revived all his power and energy. Dialogue after dialogue on "Courtesy," on "Epitaphs," on "Tuscan Poesy," on "Masks," on "Retirement from the World," on "Peace," with letters innumerable flowed from his indefatigable pen. Nor was his muse idle. A multitude of canzoni, and sonnets, and madrigals, celebrated the friends whom he met, the protectors whom he sought, the sights which he witnessed, or the events of which he heard. He found time also for study; and in his books, "he often forgot, for awhile, the miseries of his life, his situation, his lot, and

as it were himself." Three large volumes of poetry, and prose, were thus composed, and arranged by him, by the October of this year.

Still the contrast between those bright scenes, and the dimness and melancholy of his cell, the pleasant air without, and the damp, heavy atmosphere to which he returned, must have been very oppressive. There is a playful, but extreme sadness, resulting from such a comparison in the following canzone, addressed to the young heir of Ferdinand, Prince of Tuscany, which, however, it is impossible to express in a translation :

O daughters of the earth,
Companions of the morn,
Winds! wand'ring dwellers of the empty air!
Who here, where in fierce mirth
Fate locks me for her scorn,
Alone give audience to my deep despair,
Ye envoys kind and fair
To lovers woe begone,

Ye Cupid's couriers sweet,
So faithful, mute, and fleet,
Who waft the burning sigh, the bursting groan,
And all love's gentle pain,
Where kind ears hear, kind hearts reply again!

Lo! whelm'd in deadlier woe,
Than lover's saddest smart,
By how much hate, than love, hath heavier stroke,
On you, ye winds, I throw
The tones which from my heart
Now just disdain, now unjust pangs evoke.
Not of a merry mock
From lips of rosy guile,
Not of a furtive glance,
Not of shy countenance,
Not of a brow severe, and scornful smile,
Not of a glove, or veil,
That hides the lily, and the rose, I wail.

Ah, no! with wild lament
The newest pangs I moan
Which all the realms of fate, and hate, contain.
Mid my vast discontent
I see e'en Pity drown

Her white cheeks ghastly with death's spectral stain.
In vain the gates I strain
Of this my living hell,
Where aye the the angels urge
The loud avenging scourge,
To quench my torment in the Muses' well,
New Orpheus with his lyre;
So stern my Proserpine's relentless ire.

Ye winds, that free and wild,
Where'er ye please may glide,
And light from pole to pole your pinions spread,
There, where the royal child
By his soft cradle side
Prints with his tott'ring steps the velvet mead,
Fly now with rapid tread!
That mighty Cosmo's heir
May hear my mournful lay
Mid your sweet murmurs play
Through myrtles, flowers, and bays. The chaunt of care
In deep responsive song
Shall Arno's swans, and nightingales, prolong.

CHAPTER II.

IMPRISONMENT CONTINUED—RELEASE.

TASSO's hopes were again dashed. Nothing came of the Duke's promises, or the intercessions of his friends. "The long solitude" was once more to afflict him. The little liberty which he had enjoyed, was taken from him. He was no more suffered to go out, even to confession, or to mass. Whatever it was that had revived Alfonso's jealousy or ill-will; whether some fresh calumny, or some new discovery, or merely the changeful humour of

tyranny, was the cause of this renewed oppression, Tasso had to see his expectations vanish once more; his prison-doors close on him again; his friends with difficulty admitted to visit him; the prospect of imprisonment again stretching out indefinitely, and interminably before him.

While he lay in this uncomfortable condition, there arose a violent storm, where there seemed least cause for any apprehension. This was the famous attack of the Academy della Crusca in Florence, on his "Jerusalem." This academy was of no note at the time. But there was one of great renown, called the Florentine, the first of these academics in Italy entitled the great and the sacred, subsequently absorbed in that "della Crusca," which rose to the eminence it afterwards possessed, principally through the notice it attracted by this absurd assault upon Tasso. These academies, notwithstanding the classical grandeur of the title, were nothing more than

literary or artistic clubs. There had been one in each of the principal capitals of Italy for some considerable time, taking their designation, either from the city where they flourished, or from the founder who established them.

Thus there had long been the Florentine, the Neapolitan, the Roman, the Venetian Academy. Then these branched out into several societies in all the great cities, and multiplied similar slips in all the lesser towns. These were innumerable all over Italy at the time of Tasso's imprisonment. A few scholars, and authors joined themselves together; circulated their compositions, and observations round the society; met from time to time to compare notes and opinions, on the various publications of the age; originated criticisms on every work that appeared; and formed, as was natural, literary parties at deadly enmity with one another. Sometimes, indeed, they did not confine themselves to their proper weapons, to pen and ink,

envenomed remarks, and biting sarcasms. The champions of an opinion, an observation, a solecism, or a quantity, went so far as to employ accusations of heresy, or even poison, and the dagger, against their rivals.

These academies had also various characters. Some were grave some gay, some sober some bacchanalian, some witty some wise, some pious some alas! impious. Some affected straightforwardness; some aimed at singularity. Some were mostly confined to one class of persons, scholars, or artists, or men of science, but far more were mixed assemblages, gathered from all professions, and all classes of society, from Popes down to buffoons. The members pretended to be much attached to one another, and to live on the friendliest, and easiest terms of intimacy.

Each academy assumed some particular nickname, and so did every member when enrolled in his society. By this he was

supposed to be known to all his brethren, and distinguished from the profane world without. The members in general chose names suited to the common title of the society, and wore out the joke perfectly threadbare, by their punning descriptions of themselves and of their works. There was the famous nocturnal reunion of the Vatican, which produced the Noctes Vaticanæ, founded by Saint Carlo Borromeo, under the name of "Chaos." There were the "Spiriteds," the "Ethereals," the "Unnamed Ones," of each of which Tasso was a member; the "Sleepers," whose secretary he was invited to be; the "Bright Ones," the "Dark Ones," the "Soft Ones," the "Rough Ones," the "Fieries," the "Moists," the "Transformed," the "Immoveables," the "Savages," the "Lazies," the "Fantastics," the "Frozens," the "Thirsties," the "Argonauts," the "Galley-slaves," the "Sleepies," the "Wideawakes," the "Madmen," the "Merries," the "Melancholies," the "Men of Virtue

and Fame," of the "Fountain," the "Vineyard," the "Cask," and innumerable other such titles.

Then for individual designations, in the society with Chaos there would be Night and Demogorgon, and all the Titans; Apollonius Rhodius would supply names to all the Argonauts; the Moists would call themselves the Frog, the Eel, the Reed, the Rush; among the Fieries would be the Broiled, the Roasted, the Fried, and so on. The Academy della Crusca took its name from crusca, a bolting-cloth. Accordingly, Tasso's chief assailants were the "Mealy" and the "Brown-bread;" lo Infarinato, and lo Inferigno, Leonardo Salviati, and Bastiano de' Rossi, were their real names. They entitled their first criticism "a Sifting." It begins in this notable way.

"Our academy, which has taken, as men know, the title of the Bolting-cloth, because it bolts the flour presented to it from time to time, that it may separate off the bran, being as-

sembled in full conclave according to custom at their dwelling; and having learned from their steward that a little bag of flour had just been left to be passed through the sieve, gave orders that it should be brought before them by their bailiff's servants. Having read in the ticket stitched upon it the name of Cammillo Pellegrino, they had the mouth of the bag untied; and when the judges had examined it, they ordered their factor immediately to take the measure, and the weight, and to register both, together with the ticket in their book of accounts. No sooner said than done; and by the order of the arch-consul (this was the title of the president of the Academy) the flour was speedily sifted through the boulter, and the bran separated from it."

This exordium may serve as a specimen of the whole composition, which is a violent abuse of Tasso, his poem, and even his father, and his father's poems, and may suffice to show both

the method of criticism too often followed by these academies, and the way in which they carried out the allegory of their designation, and also to prove that this academy did not by any means in its cradle, (it was born just two years before this attack) promise that eminence which it afterwards attained, as "supreme arbiter of taste and language throughout Italy." The occasion of this violent storm of witticisms and criticisms was the following. The "Orlando Furioso" was in the zenith of its well-deserved renown. It was usually celebrated by all writers of the age, as the perfection of Italian poetry. When the "Jerusalem Delivered" appeared, notwithstanding the "odiousness of comparisons," and Tasso's earnest deprecations, the literary world would compare them together. Even Orazio Ariosto, the great poet's nephew, could not help joining the throng, and assigning the first place upon Parnassus, and the fairest crown of bays to his uncle's involuntary rival.

Nothing could be in better taste than Tasso's answer; I mean as to feeling. "The famous Greek,"* he writes, "conqueror of Xerxes, used to say that he was often awakened by the remembrance of the Marathonian trophies of Miltiades. It was not that he purposed to destroy them, but he desired to raise others for his own glory, which should equal, or at least resemble those of his predecessor. I will not deny that the crowns of your 'ever-blooming Homer'—I mean your Ferrarese Homer—have occasioned me some sleepless nights: not that I ever desired to strip off one leaf or flower from them, but because I had an extreme longing to win new crowns, which if not equal, if not similar to his, should yet, to use your own expressions, preserve a lasting verdure, nor fear death's frost. Such has been the aim of my long vigils. If I reach it, I shall regard all my labours as well spent. If not, I shall console myself with the example of so many illustrious

* Themistocles.

men, who have not been ashamed to fail in grand enterprises."

"The bull was given to Entellus, who obtained the victory. Nevertheless, Dares received a sword and glittering helmet to console his defeat. Why in the conflicts of genius, where, if it is glorious to overcome, it is less humbling to be overcome, should there not be several prizes offered to the champions? Not that I would enter the lists like Dares, who, with 'head elate, and preparing for the duel, shows his broad shoulders, and tosses his brawny arms.' Far be from me the vanity of the youth! Let your Entellus remain in peace. Let him rest in glory. I would not, by any unbecoming challenge, force him to rise out of his place. I honour him, I bow to him, I call him aloud my father, my master, my lord. I give him all titles of honour which love or reverence can dictate." He continues in the same strain throughout the letter.

But, notwithstanding all that Tasso could thus say, notwithstanding the care he had taken to write in a completely different method and style, his enemies would accuse him of presumptuously entering the lists, to challenge the established pre-eminence of his competitor. Among the numerous pamphlets which the appearance of the "Jerusalem" called forth, was one by Orazio Lombardelli, in which some objections were made to Tasso's plan, intermingled, however, with high and fair eulogiums. Tasso answered these objections, defending especially the rules of Aristotle on the poetic art. He was thought to reflect thus on the wild magnificent disorder of Ariosto.

Then came a dialogue on epic poetry, by a certain Camillo Pellegrino, in which he avowedly placed Tasso not only above Ariosto, but above all previous poets. This was the apple of discord. Immediately a host of

Tassists and Ariostists* darkened the land. The literary world of Italy became one wide battle-field. As we have seen, the first to commence the war were those Academicians della Crusca, in that affected and absurd pamphlet, of which the beginning has been given. This was the "Sifting" (Stacciata) of Pellegrino's dialogue by "the Mealy" (lo Infarinato) Salviati. Tasso's friends, it would be endless and useless to recount the combatants, began to reply. The other side rejoined. Then came new replies, and new rejoinders. So the noise of the paper conflict rolled on during all the remainder of Tasso's life, and, indeed long after he was dead, if it is even now altogether hushed.

The works of the first champions are principally remarkable for virulence, scurrility, and

* There was a play published under the title of "Il Tassita e L'Ariostista," a wretched imitation of the "Frogs" of Aristophanes.

vanity, and a deficiency of wit, especially on the part of Tasso's assailants. It is impossible to read them without being reminded of the battle between the pigmies and cranes, or the frogs and mice. The shrill small squeak here—the loud hoarse croak there—in continual unintelligible and unprofitable repetition, a strife and a din, mighty and fearful in the judgment of the little people engaged in it; not so interesting to posterity, nor worthy to be redeemed "from tapers and defrauded pies!"

> Thy hand, great Dullness! lets the curtain fall;
> And universal darkness buries all.*

Tasso's conduct presented a very favourable contrast to that of his adversaries. They disgusted all but their own partizans by their bitterness and unreasonableness. When the first pamphlet, the "Stacciata" was brought to him, he took very little heed of it. Presently, however, he threw off, in a very short time,

* The Dunciad.

an "Apology" which was sent to Scalabrino, a printer in Ferrara, but not published for some months, having been written in April, but not appearing until July. In the meanwhile that second attack of having abused the Florentine government, and insultingly neglected to mention the Duomo of Florence, in his comparison between France and Italy, was launched against him, and abuses heaped, not only on himself, but on his father also. To them he replied in an "answer to the Academy della Crusca," in defence of his Dialogue on "Virtuous Pleasure."

He observes that his adversaries, instead of showing that magnanimity which becomes scholars, seemed rather bent on persecuting one already overwhelmed with misfortune and affliction. He complains of the unkindness of his critics, who having formerly when he was in prosperity, sought his friendship eagerly, now that he was in adversity, seemed bent

on forcing him into an enmity which he had always deprecated. This touched Salviati, who had pretended great friendship with Tasso, and who (Serassi thinks) for the purpose of making interest and obtaining a good post in the Court of Ferrara, undertook the miserable task of abusing its victim.

His apology then appeared, which he sent with a letter to Ferrante Gonzaga. This he felt himself compelled to undertake, not so much for his own, as for his father's defence. "For I," he says, "willingly yield the palm to him in every kind of composition, nor can I bear that any one should be preferred to him. His defence is not forced on me by the laws of Athens, or of Rome, but by the laws of nature, which are eternal, and cannot be altered by any man's will, nor lose their authority with the change of kingdoms and empires." He thought at first that he was replying to the great Florentine Academy,

never having heard of that of "della Crusca." His critic ridiculously taunts him with his mistake in a subsequent rejoinder.

In the letter which accompanied this "Apology" to Ferrante Gonzaga, he observes, that though his poem being a human work, and so imperfect, had met with divers objections, he nevertheless had reason to be thankful for having justifications sufficient to defend himself, which he put together in that little work which he sent. This, with his greater work, with his hope and welfare, and if he might say so, his fortune, he felt sure that he might safely commit to Ferrante. That generous prince was much pleased with Tasso's confidence and compliments, and sent him in return a hundred and fifty gold crowns to relieve his present wants, a most acceptable present in his state of destitution.

The accusations to which he replied in his "Apology" were principally these, that the

"Jerusalem" was mere history with no plot. That it was disproportioned, poor, dull, meagre, disagreeable. That its style, from its attempt at brevity, was obscure, forced, intricate, unintelligible. That it was a farrago of all kinds of strange outlandish words, Latin, Greek, Lombard; new, absurd, and sometimes so stilted as to be ridiculous. That the verses were often rough, tumbling, with a perpetual jingle: that it had no power of expression; no such vigour and "life-giving energy" as are found in Ariosto. That in its attempts to delineate the passions, it falls flat, languid, wire-drawn and unmeaning; that its comparisons are vulgar and pedantic; that its morality is questionable; in short, and in fine, that it will not be much read, that it will speedily be forgotten, and that as soon as the talk about it was over it will utterly disappear. These specimens will doubtless suffice to satiate us with the critics and their prophesies.

Wise is the bard who much by nature knows;
But with uncheck'd hoarse tongues the book-learn'd crew,
In vain, like chatt'ring crows,
Jove's bird divine pursue.*

In contradiction of this assertion, it is scarcely needful to repeat Ginguené's remark, that time has had its usual effect. The critics and their answers have disappeared. The poem only remains:

E di cento migliaia, che l' arena
Su 'l fondo involve, un se ne serva appena.

Tasso meanwhile paid but little attention to these literary skirmishes. He was far more occupied in incessant endeavours to obtain his liberty. His energy in this labour is surprising, though natural. There was no friend,

* Σοφὸς ὁ πόλλα εἰδῶς φυᾷ
μαθόντες δὲ λάβροι παγγλωσσίᾳ, &c.
PINDAR.

no patron of the Muses of any distinction, no grandee remarkable for compassion or piety, whom he did not appeal to, either by letter or through the intercession of friends, or by both these means. Europe, as it were, felt filled with pity for so renowned a sufferer, and set itself in commotion to procure his release. The Emperor, Rodolph II., the Cardinal Albert of Austria his brother, Pope Gregory XIII., and, afterwards, Sixtus V., Cardinal Albano, the Duke of Savoy, the Grand-duke and Duchess of Tuscany, the Duke of Urbino and his family, the Duke and Duchess of Mantua, and the Prince Vincenzo, their son, the other Gonzagas, the Prince of Molfetta, the Signor di Sassuolo, Don Scipione, and many other persons of the highest quality and rank, several of them related or connected with the d'Este family; Lucrezia, the Duke's sister; then Antonio Sersale, Tasso's nephew from Naples; and the city of Bergamo, Tasso's

country as he esteemed it, at his urgent request, all combined with repeated and importunate entreaties to wring his freedom from Alfonso. Torquato's letter to Bergamo is striking.

"Torquato Tasso of Bergamo, by affection as well as origin, having first lost the inheritance of his father, and the dower of his mother, and then the service of many years, and the labours of much time, and all hope of recompence, and finally his health and liberty, amidst so many miseries has not lost his confidence in this his city, or the boldness to implore it, that it will publicly bestir itself to give him help and refuge, by supplicating the Duke of Ferrara, once his friend and benefactor, to restore him to his country, to his relations, to his friends, to himself. The sufferer therefore beseeches your lordships to petition his Highness, and to send Monsignor Licino, or some one else, by express, in order

to negociate his release, for which he will feel perpetually obliged, nor finish the memory of his obligation, even with his life."

He wrote again and again to his friends at Bergamo, to Licino, to Cristoforo Tasso, beseeching them to hasten the city authorities, and exert themselves all they could, that his life might be saved, "which is miserably distracted," he cries, "in prison, between indignation and melancholy."

The council of Bergamo could not refrain from tears, when Tasso's letter was read. They eagerly complied with his request, and commissioned Licino to proceed to Ferrara, and make a public petition for their compatriot's release, accompanying the embassy with the present of an ancient inscription on a marble base, perhaps the pedestal of a statue, commencing with the words, "Atestia, Ede, Atestiæ," relating it was supposed to the antiquities of the d'Este family, which Alfonso was very

desirous of obtaining, in order to settle the important controversy, whether "d'Este" should be written in Latin, Atestinus, or Estensis.

The Duke received the deputation graciously, and accepted the offering of the stone, and promised to comply with the request of so honourable a city before much time had elapsed, and permitted the object of their petition to go out once or twice on a visit, or to dinner. In the same way, he gave most compassionate and gracious replies to all the intercessions made to him, declaring that he only kept Tasso in confinement, for his advantage, and to recover him from his long, inveterate disorder, if it were possible to cure him.

"He would have granted," says Serassi, naively, "the urgent prayers of so many noble patrons, and set him at liberty with pleasure; but reflecting that poets are naturally 'genus

irritabile,' and fearing that Tasso, once free, would revenge himself for his long confinement, and his ill-treatment in the Ferrarese Court, with that formidable weapon, his pen, he could not bring himself to the resolution of suffering him to escape from his States, without being first assured, that he would make no attempt on the honour and reverence due to so great a Prince."

Tasso, though his hopes were thus again frustrated, though so unwell, and so reduced by suffering of body and mind, still held up wonderfully against the miseries of his condition. It seemed as if there was a contest between oppression and endurance; as if Alfonso was resolutely bent on breaking Tasso's spirit, and reducing him to the idiotcy, or madness, of which he accused him; as if Tasso, on the other hand, was as resolved, with help from above, not to give way, not to surrender himself to

despair, or give any just ground any more for the accusation brought against him, and which, at first, he had unhappily confirmed.

He was, indeed, sorely tried; but received some comfort on the arrival of Camillo Albizzi, the new Florentine ambassador, who came to treat about the marriage of Cesare d'Este, the most probable heir to the Dukedom of Ferrara, with Virginia de' Medici. He, unlike his predecessor, was most kindly disposed toward Tasso. His secretary also, Antonio Costantini, a young but learned scholar, won his way into Tasso's affection, and became, indeed, his first and most attached friend, surpassing in his attentions, his offices of kindness and consolation, the frequency and regularity of his visits, and his unwearied exertions to set forward his liberation, all Tasso's older and excellent friends, such as Ardizio, or Licino, or Cataneo, or even Father Angelo Grillo. With him Tasso ever kept up a diligent and multitudinous corres-

pondence. Indeed in A.D. 1617, Costantini published a large volume of the poet's letters to himself.

Tasso, thus supported, had still energy and spirit to enter into a lively controversy with a young relation of his own, Ercole Tasso, who had been called the Philosopher, and had written an earnest declamation against women in general, and marriage in particular, which he naturally answered himself by marrying a very pretty, and well-born lady, Lelia Agosti. This was a pleasant opportunity for Tasso to display his learning, eloquence, and customary gallantry, by writing a long letter, or rather treatise, in opposition to his cousin's. He sent this, with the kindest expressions of courtesy and welcome, to the young bride, and of congratulation to Ercole; and, at the same time, a beautiful canzone, esteemed one of the finest he ever wrote, "so that I cannot but marvel," says Serassi, "how Tasso, at this time, suffering

from forgetfulness, and weak in every sense, and every limb, could write with such vivacity and learning," we may add with such sweetness and kindness of heart, which are even more marvellous in his circumstances. He describes them very movingly in a letter to Bishop Papio, dated about this time (September 1585) from Santa Anna.

"I inform you that by ill-health of many years' standing, I am become most forgetful, and most sorrowful for this reason, although this is far from my only affliction. I suffer besides from weakness in every sense and every limb; premature old age so to speak; imprisonment; ignorance of the affairs of the world; solitude, which is the most painful and distressing of all, especially as it parts me not so much from men as from friends; and perpetual disturbance at the hands of those who shew themselves enemies to my quiet;" intruders, probably, who came to stare, or servants at-

tached to the establishment who came to annoy and harass, a catalogue of troubles sufficient to try any person's fortitude.

Then came another gleam of hope, and another disappointment; for, indeed, they succeeded one another, like the light and sunshine of a storm: or rather it seemed as if Alfonso was playing, cat-like, with his victim, elevating him with some tokens of forgiveness and favour, and appearing on the point of releasing him altogether; and then throwing him down again in a moment, and drawing him back into his clutches, with a wayward and capricious malice, which one hardly likes to characterise as it deserves.

The marriage of Cesare d'Este (he was Alfonso's cousin, whose questionable birth had been justified by a bull of legitimacy from Pope Alexander VI., in spite of which Clement VIII. claimed and appropriated the dominions of Ferrara, as a lapsed fee of the Papal See) with Virginia de' Medici was now celebrated at

Florence, during the Carnival of A.D. 1586, with all the splendour and pomp for which that city was renowned. Cesare then brought his bride to Ferrara; and their nuptials were chaunted by Tasso in a fine canzone, and six lighter compositions, called "ballate," adapted for music and dancing.

From the two spouses he received in return promises of speedy deliverance. As usual, the rules of his imprisonment were relaxed for a season, and he had permission to make several visits, and to attend frequently in the churches during Lent. His hope rose higher than ever. Then presently the cords were tightened again. The promises of Cesare and his Princess came to nothing. After two years of disappointment his expectation was deceived as usual, his confinement as strict as ever.

This was almost too much for his health and resolution. The wild fantastic images, which he had before complained of seeing, multiplied,

and increased upon him. His cell seemed to him at times full of all kinds of apparitions, some troubled, and mournful, and gloomy, some bright, and clear, and merry. Flames wreathed and twined themselves across the dark walls of his prison. Sparkles of fire seemed actually to come out of his own eyes. Shadowy forms of rats and other obscene animals glided across the vault of the room, where they could not naturally be. His ears were full of alarming noises, whistlings, and ringings, and bells tolling, and clocks striking. Continually, in his sleep, and often even waking, he was engaged in hard and perilous strife with the spectres that surrounded him. Horses trampled on him, and monsters butted him in his bed. There was, above all, a goblin sprite which harassed and tormented him with impudent gambols, and perpetual robberies.

When no person had been in his prison, his closets were broken open, his clothes taken

away, his books pulled down and flung about the room, his gloves or letters drawn out from locked boxes at night, and scattered over the floor in the morning. His money was stolen from him as he slept, though, he says, with discretion, that is, in small amounts at a time. "And though they have robbed me thus discreetly," he writes to his old friend Cataneo, "I cannot feel sure that they will not have the rest. Accordingly I send you what remains of the money given me by the Princes of Molfetta and Mantua, and by Sign. Paolo Grillo, and the Marquis d'Este, in all twenty-four gold crowns, two zeccheens, and forty ducats in small change. I beseech you to inform me of your receiving them, and to take care that they, with my books and writings, which are no safer than my money, may escape the hands of the devil." He saw also a loaf snatched out of his hands, a dish of fruits, and other eatables, removed from before him, when no one was in the

room. Many of his books and other pieces of furniture kept disappearing continually, he knew not how. He apprehended disorders of every kind. Sometimes he thought he had the falling sickness, sometimes the gout, sometimes that his eyesight was failing. He had pains in his head, though not excessive, pains in his bowels, in his side, in his thighs, in his legs, but only slight. He was awakened by vomitings, by a flux of blood, by fever. "And amidst so many terrors, and so many sufferings, there appeared in the air, the form of the glorious Virgin, with her Son in her arms, in the centre of bright and glittering clouds. Whence I ought not to despair of her grace. And although this might easily be mere fancy, because I am frenetical, and almost always disturbed by various apparitions, and full of infinite melancholy; nevertheless, by the grace of God, I am able "cohibere assensum" (to withhold my consent), which is the operation of the wise

man, according to Cicero, wherefore I ought rather to believe that it was a miracle of the Virgin's."

How far all these strange and wild expressions are fantastical descriptions of persecutions experienced at the hands of the menials of the hospital, and his unmerciful enemies, who, he assures us, had keys of his chambers, and his closets, and his desks, and who seem to have done their worst to plague and harass him in every way; how far they record the uncontrollable operations of a vivid imagination in solitude, imprisonment, and disappointment; how far they were spectral illusions produced by ill health, and a bilious habit, and the approach of fever, which, as Dr. Abercrombie remarks, in his chapter on such illusions, is generally preceded by similar hallucinations, it would be, I suppose, very difficult to determine.

Tasso seems by no means to have settled

the question with himself. No particular hallucination, however, is discoverable which is generally reckoned a mark of insanity. And, as he justly says, his assent was in his own power, he could grant it or withhold it as he chose. The inability to do this, is most commonly regarded as the decisive proof of madness.

Can we, however, wonder that he most earnestly implores his friends to procure his release from this most miserable imprisonment; that he appeals to all his patrons and intercessors, new and old, at Rome, at Florence, at Mantua, at Bergamo, at Ferrara itself, to exert all their powers to bend the cruel resolution of Alfonso; that he cries out to Cataneo: "Oh! Signor Maurizio, when will come the day in which I shall be able to breathe the open sky, and not see always a locked door in front of me, whenever I feel any need of a physician or a confessor." He complains also

in poetry to Albizzi of the dreadful continuance of his imprisonment.

Of grace and virtue thou; and I of woe
And errors only full. My changeless doom
Chokes me, till life seems death, the world a tomb,
A Hades of unmoving shades. But, lo!
Thy gentle love draws near with heavenly glow,
Lightening the dark, and tinging the deep gloom,
As morning's herald beams the sky illume,
Ere the sun leaps from the deep gulf below.
And if I kindle not at light so fair,
Who shall dispel the night? Too long, alas!
This hideous shadow! Lord of ages, ne'er
Grant that to death in these vain cries I pass,
Nor e'er escape the woe, nor e'er attain
The meed from earliest years expected still in vain!

Pope Sixtus V., in compliance with the poor sufferer's urgent requests, made particular interest with Cesare d'Este, who happened to be at Rome, addressing him personally in Tasso's behalf. He accordingly wrote to Tasso to comfort him, assuring him that before long he

should be set at liberty; that as soon as he returned from Rome, he would immediately take measures for his freedom.

Tasso was once more buoyed up with hope, so strong were the expressions conveyed to him. So certain indeed did he feel of his release, that "I desire," he writes, "my liberty and your return with equal ardour, by which I hope to be consoled, since you say I must believe you. Meanwhile, I will endeavour to endure the wretchedness of my prison as well as I can, not being able to bear it as I would." And in a second letter he seemed to himself on the very brink of his liberation. "This morning I expect that Signor Antonio Costantini, secretary of the Florentine ambassador, will come and take me out of prison; and if I go and dine with him, as I imagine I should, I hope that I shall find no difficulty in obtaining leave to come to Rome, or of being permitted, in some way or other, to find my way thither."

Cesàre, and his brother Alessandro, afterwards Cardinal, were certainly anxious for Tasso's release. Both however, the former especially, as hoping to be Alfonso's successor, were naturally afraid of offending that jealous and suspicious prince. Nevertheless, Cesare on his return from Rome, with the earnest recommendations of the Pope to back him, with the Grand Duke of Tuscany, his kinsman by marriage, the Grand Duke's ambassador Camilli, a faithful friend of Tasso's, to co-operate with him, the Duke of Mantua, and Vincenzo his son and heir, making also the most strenuous efforts and pressing instances to assist him, spoke at last openly and urgently to Alfonso.

These representations, his promise to Bergamo, and most probably Tasso's failing health, which seemed likely at this time to release the poor prisoner in a way which he could not prevent, at last prevailed with the Duke. He gave the petitioners to understand that Tasso should

be liberated, on condition that he should remain in the Duke of Mantua's charge, and submit, under his control, to whatever treatment should be necessary for him.

It seemed, indeed, as if this permission, so long and earnestly desired, obtained with such labour, and diligence, and difficulty, and as it were by the united commotion of Italy, would come too late to be of any avail to the poor sufferer who had thus hardly won it. One can scarcely help saying that this was Alfonso's feeling, and that he would never have been persuaded to show this mercy, had he not believed that it would be useless; for Tasso, seeing the fulfilment of his hope so highly excited, yet once more delayed, and indeed already sick and unwell, fell into a very dangerous fever, of whose approach those spectral illusions which peopled his prison, and thronged around him sleeping and waking, were probably the precursors. On the fourth day of

this attack the physicians, who seem at last to have been permitted to attend him, began to entertain fears, and on the seventh to despair of his life.

He could no longer move. He was unable even to take any more remedies. "Nature and art," he says, "could give no further succour to my frail life when I turned myself to thee, and trusted in thee, oh! glorious Virgin, and thou besoughtest for me thine Eternal Son."

In answer, as he thought, to these cries, another vision was vouchsafed to him. The Virgin Mary, crowned and girdled with glory, flashing out divine splendours and brightnesses, and in the midst of them Saint Benedict on her right hand, and Santa Scholastica on her left, came down in compassion into his cell. He made vows immediately of offerings in the churches in Mantua, and of a pilgrimage to Loretto. He dedicated his heart and his pen to her who restored and

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cured him; and the fever ceased. He gradually recovered.

Whatever we may think of these visions, of their cause, their reality, the doctrines to which they allude, and on which they are built, it is difficult to help admiring with Ginguené, the pathos, the meekness, and simplicity with which such a genius relates them. How common these stories were at that period, and indeed are still under the warm skies of Italy, every one is aware. How very frequent they are everywhere with certain dispositions and temperaments; how easily enthusiasm gives reality and life to the impressions and sights, "proceeding from the heat-oppressed brain," even without the accessory circumstances, which predisposed Tasso to a belief in what he saw, every one acquainted with the religious world could easily testify. How vivid and painfully distinct the impressions on the organs of sight and hearing become in solitude, in the restless-

ness and watchfulness of sickness and fever, especially when the patients are of a bilious and melancholy turn, all medical experience acknowledges. Without concluding such representations to be in any degree miraculous, or more than can be accounted for by the usual strange activity of the mind under certain conditions, and in certain circumstances, may we not believe that they are mercifully used in many instances, for the kind purposes of that Providence which watches over us, and from which not a restless motion in the bed, nor a stir of the agitated and feverish mind are hidden. Tasso then recovered gradually, though it seems rapidly from this attack.

Ferrara is now a dark, heavy, half-deserted looking city, with broad streets, and great black palaces that resemble fortresses. They have lowering portcullissed gateways under high dingy towers, clamped and nailed gates, barred and grated windows. The Po, when not dry, rolls slug-

gishly by the walls in a brown muddy flood. The streets all have much resemblance to one another, a dull, still, sombre look.

The Hospital of Santa Anna stands in the middle of the town. There is nothing remarkable about it except its reputation. It is a sad dingy-looking building. Its windows grated and barred, like the rest, look out into one of those silent and desolate streets. The gratings and bars are at present worn and broken. In A.D. 1586, the streets were more thronged and noisy, and the gratings and bars were entire.

At one of these windows, a face, handsome, but extremely sad, rather past middle life, but haggard beyond its age; the hair, though partially white, falling down in delicate curls from the high and somewhat wrinkled forehead; the cheeks, pale and ghastly, as of one just recovering from severe illness; thin lips anxiously parted from one

another, and showing the white teeth set; eyes preternaturally bright, and fixed with an intense eager gaze down the street; might be seen day after day through the bars, reappearing, like a pale phantom every morning; planted there during the long June day, and lost in the twilight at last without withdrawing from its post. Not a passer-by but paused, and turned to take a hurried glance at the window, and then swept rapidly on, as if afraid of observation.

Tasso was looking from his prison window in heart-rending anxiety for the announcement of his release. For a fortnight he kept watching thus. He knew his friends were exerting themselves to the utmost of their power to bend the Duke's purpose. Albizzi, the Florentine ambassador, was again labouring for it through the interest of Leonora de' Medici, Vincenzo Gonzaga's wife; Cesare d'Este also continued his importunities in conjunction with his bride, Vir-

ginia de' Medici, to whose influence, indeed, her husband's earnestness and courage were principally owing. The Duchess of Mantua, Alfonso's sister-in-law, kept pouring in most persuasive and imploring letters. Finally, Vincenzo came to Ferrara in person, to pay his compliments to Cesare and Virginia, and to offer his wife's congratulations, who was Virginia's niece.

Urged by Angelo Grillo, and by Costantini, he, in compliance with Alfonso's demand, offered to take charge of Tasso, and be answerable for his detention, should he be permitted to accompany him to Mantua. Overwhelmed at last with these repeated entreaties, and united remonstrances, and ashamed to retract his engagements, Alfonso at length signified his consent, though with the greatest possible reluctance. The conditions of his release were reiterated and made more stringent. He was to reside at Mantua under strict surveillance.

Vincenzo and his father were to be responsible for his person; he was to engage never to use his pen against the Ferrarese court; he was never to show his face in Ferrara any more.

Tasso, as he stood at the window, pressing against the bars, with that sad wistful gaze, beheld at length his little friend, Costantini, running breathless, and with every token of joy, toward the hospital. He heard him rushing through the gate and the chambers, and with unspeakable delight received at last the announcement that his release was actually agreed to, and that within three or four days he should be taken out of prison. For six more days he resumed his anxious watch, unable even to rest at night for the fever of his expectation. He contrived, however, to compose two stanzas of poetry for which Vincenzo Gonzaga had asked.

Finally, on the fifth or sixth of July A.D.

1586, Costantini and a gentleman of Vincenzo's arrived at the hospital with the order for his deliverance, directed to the new prior of the hospital, Gianbatista Vincenzi. And thus, after seven years, two months, and some days of imprisonment in a madhouse, pale, exhausted, and melancholy, Tasso came out again into the world, to enjoy the half freedom wrung for him with such difficulty, from Alfonso's inveterate dislike.

Ah, flowing tears! Ah, racking pain!
Swift fleets our life. It crumbles, and is past,
Like ice dissolving fast.
All height bows down, and scatters o'er the plain
Each firmest stay.
Each mighty sway
That grew by war, in peace decays again.
As spring 'neath scorching suns, fame's brightest bloom
Sinks blackening to the tomb.
And like the Alpine torrent's headlong dash,

Like the lightning's sheen
O'er the dark serene,
Like air, like smoke, or like the arrow's flash,
Fly all our glories. Every chaunted power
Droops like a fading flower.
What hope we more? what more expect, or praise?
From triumph's loud roll
What is left for the soul
Save woe, and sighs, and sad lamenting lays?
What gain in friendship now? In love what gain?
Ah, flowing tears! Ah, racking pain!*

* Concluding verses of the Torrismondo, in which Sismondi judges Tasso to allude to his own fortunes.

CHAPTER III.

NEW DIFFICULTIES.

Tasso's first sensations at Costantini's announcement were full of rapturous gladness and hope. Before the six days' interval had elapsed between his announcement and his release, he began to feel how much he was changed in himself, how little he had to anticipate. He longed to accompany Vincenzo to Mantua, only "because nothing else could at that time, if not make him happy, at least diminish his continual melancholy." Then,

again, in the first ecstasy of liberation from the sad noises, and ghastly delusions of the mad-house, and of restoration to the free air and open sky, for which he had so panted, he imagined that peace and happiness with renown and honour, and the delights of friendship and affection would surround him, and soothe the remainder of his pilgrimage. He thought that his 'deliverers, as he writes to Leonora de' Medici, "had brought back health to the sick, light to the blind, life to the dead."

But when these first moments of rapture were passed, he found that seven years of imprisonment, solitude, suffering, insult, poverty, want, and weakness, we might add incessant mental exertion, had done their work too surely. A restlessness, and melancholy remained, which, for a long time, he could not overcome. The short interval during which he sojourned at Ferrara, till Vincenzo was ready

for his departure, he spent in the house of the Ambassador Albizi, neither visiting himself, nor seeming desirous of being visited, either from fear of giving new offence to Alfonso, or from weakness, and gloom, and exhaustion of mind, and heart, and body, and the stupefaction of so great a change.

He was either not permitted, or else could not exert himself to arrange about his furniture and books, and other goods. Some he deposited with different friends. Some were left in the hospital, "among which were papers of great importance to him." These, as we shall see, he had the greatest difficulty in recovering. Alfonso, one feels, could not bear to let him go altogether. He would keep one string in his hand with which to annoy him, even after he had released him, and banished him from his presence.

Then, in the company, and under the charge of Vincenzo, Tasso left Ferrara, the scene of

his youthful enjoyments, of so much bright hope, ambitious desire, passionate love, wide-spread renown, of so much darkness and misery, and trial, and suffering, and disappointment, never to return to it any more. At the age of forty-two, he went forth with a heart well-nigh broken, and a frame prematurely bent, without any regular support, or any definite prospects of subsistence, to recommence life again in the same state of precarious dependance which had been so difficult to endure before his imprisonment. The Duke would not allow him to kiss his hand before his departure, showing that his enmity was by no means obliterated, and showing surely that his compassionate expressions were a fiction.

Tasso's movements were under strict control. His liberation was as little like freedom as could be imagined. He was never to be left to himself, nor to stir from Mantua without immediate permission, and some person who

should be answerable for his return, to accompany him. All these ties, in addition to his weakness and melancholy, were certainly sufficient to mingle many drops of gall and wormwood in his cup of happiness.

Nevertheless, when, on his arrival at Mantua, he was most kindly received by Duke William, lodged in his palace, waited on by his servants, provided with becoming apparel, and a delicate and abundant table; when he was much noticed and caressed by the young Prince and his wife, who seems to have felt sincere pity and friendship for him; when among the ministers and courtiers he found numerous tried friends, several of distinguished talents and literary attainments, anxious to pay him every possible attention, and to contribute all they could to his health and comfort; he obtained at least some breathing time and respite from his continual afflictions; he enjoyed for a season the portion of liberty allowed him; and anticipating a pleasant

sojourn of some considerable duration at Mantua, turned all his care first to the restoration of his health.

There have been many curious complaints, and many curious remedies invented for them.

> Many a thing hath craft and skill,
> But man is craftier, wiser still—
> And wond'rous cures does he devise
> For strange resistless maladies.*

The first revival of medical science in the sixteenth century, produced an abundance of marvellous prescriptions for marvellous disorders. Perhaps in the nineteenth century, with its metallic tractors, galvanic rings, scarifying brushes, homœopathy, mesmerism, not to mention the innumerable pastes, and pills, and powders, which cure every imaginable and

> * Πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ, κόυδὲν
> Ανθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει—
> Νόσων δ' ἀμηχάνων
> Φυγὰς ξυμ πέφρασται.
>
> Soph. Antiq.

unimaginable disease, we ought not to criticise others very severely. Nevertheless, it is impossible to help smiling at the seriousness and eagerness with which Tasso requests one of his medical friends, Gianbatista Cavallura, to furnish him with "anti-obliviousness pills," as they would now be called, such as would cure the complaint of forgetfulness, which the poet imagined was so fast gaining on him. It is to be lamented that the composition of the pills prescribed, and taken with great diligence, has not been recorded, as the remedy, if successful, would undoubtedly have been useful. The doctors also recommended a vigorous purging and bleeding; but to these violent remedies, Tasso had always a most unalterable objection. He preferred to endure the painful thoughts, wild imaginations, and spectral illusions which harassed him, and the frenesia, as he names it, which produced them, to undergoing such a rigorous and weakening treatment.

Notwithstanding these disorders, however, this man of unwearied and indomitable energy was all the while diligently prosecuting his studies, composing new works, and finishing old. He produced a canzone for the Duke of Sabionetta, to celebrate his receiving the order of the Golden Fleece from the King of Spain. He altered and amended, (having now a sufficiency of books at his command,) his dialogues of the "Ambassador," "Nobility" and "Dignity;" he wrote a political letter on the respective merits and advantages of different forms of government, which was much esteemed at the time, and highly valued by the Duke of Mantua.

He finished his father's poem of "Floridante," an episode in the interminable "Amadigi," worked out into a second interminable poem, omitting some superfluous matter, adding several stanzas, and altering and re-polishing the rest, a task of filial piety, indeed, but which has been unable to rescue the work

from its well-merited oblivion, and was certainly a sad waste of time. He altered also, and completed, his own so much expected tragedy, altering its name, as was remarked, from "Galealto" to "Torrismondo."

He complains bitterly, that in all Mantua he cannot find an "Euripides," which he wanted to refer to, and for which he would gladly have exchanged one of the two "Sophocles" which he possessed. It seems wonderful that in so large, and flourishing, and literary a capital as Mantua, there should have been such a singular deficiency. Several other instances, however, might be produced, which evidence that at this period the supply of books; especially of Greek authors, was scanty and inadequate, even in Italy.

On the 14th of December he had finished the drama. His great friend, Costantini, had it most beautifully written out and embellished in Ferrara; and he then presented it to the Princess Leonora, Vincenzo's wife, at whose

urgent encouragement he had undertaken its completion, and who was highly delighted with the splendid present. About the same time, Camillo Albizzi, the Florentine ambassador, died at Ferrara. Tasso, who owed him a deep debt of gratitude, and was strongly attached to him, wrote a long letter of consolation to his widow, which Costantini prefixed to a volume of elegies and poems of condolence on Camillo's death. He next, to please a friend, one of the Rangoni, composed a work on the office of "Secretary," divided into two separate treatises, and dedicated to Cesare d'Este, as a thank-offering for his assistance in procuring his release. He answered with wonderful patience the strange letters and poems which were poured in upon him from all quarters. We may give one instance.

A young bride, named Ippolita Paperotti, of great beauty, and wit, and wickedness, had, in combination with a lover, named Ludovico,

poisoned her husband. She was beheaded in Bologna. Her loveliness and youth, and the fortitude, and calmness, which she showed in offering her neck, without turning pale, to the blow of the headsman, awakened the usual morbid sympathy and compassion, in the hearts of the poets, and rhymesters of the age. Heaps of mis-spent pity, and poetry, covered her memory. One of these writers, who took the name of the "Scarred Academician," published a volume, called the "Crown of Steel and Poison, with other poems, on the death of Ippolita Paperotti." Tasso was naturally astounded at the title, and the verses. Nevertheless, he acknowledges the present very kindly, and only wishes him "pleasanter subjects for the future, for the exercise of so fine a talent."

Then came the Carnival with all its absurd, but elegant, extravagancies and gaities, its invitations and parties; at one or two of which

the melancholy figure of Tasso might be seen mingling amid the bright and gay throng with somewhat of his usual stately gallantry. "We have a beautiful Carnival," he writes, "and most beautiful, and graceful ladies. Never was I more grieved at not being a happy, prosperous poet. If I should not be thought either light in loving too much, or inconsistent in making a new choice, I should already have made-up my mind where to fix my thoughts."

It was, however, but a momentary revival of such impressions, accompanied by a tender recollection of—whom shall we say? One certainly, who was lost, and for ever; and whose name he was unwilling to commit to his paper, or to the friend with whom he corresponded. This image, indeed, seems to have always remained with him sad, and tender, and hallowed in his mind. He often alludes to it obscurely, but affectionately.

Perhaps it was after such a Carnival evening,

that he moralises somewhat ungallantly in the following irregular, and half-rhymed canzone, entitled

TIME,

who speaks:

Ladies! ye that proudly pace,
In the pomp of youth and grace,
Ye that laugh to scorn the arms
Of Cupid, and the Queen of charms,
Ye conquer'd never,
Conquerors ever,
Ah! vainly do ye fight
'Gainst my all-conquering might.

All the glories, all the boasts,
All the garlands, and the palms,
All the captive souls, whose hosts
Swell with their spoils your triumph's long array,
All shall be my prey.
My prey shall be beside
Your dazzling beauty, and your flaunting pride.

Great Time, great Time am I,
Your unrelenting enemy,

Your tamer, and your lord.
More only with my flight
Do I o'er you prevail,
Than Love in fiercest fight
With countless squadrons, and sharp arrowy hail.

Lo! even as I speak,
My silent wasting charm
Is entering in your eyes, and in your hair,
To strip them, and disarm.
Here it unwinds the tress;
The light it quenches there;
Here blunts the piercing darts
Of looks that slaughter'd hearts;
And here by slow decay
Makes the bright beauty fade,
Whose glitter, and whose ray,
Ere long shall be but ashes and a shade.

I speed, I course, I fly.
Oh, blind! ye will not see
My speed, my course, my flight.
No more ye see how light
I sweep away your glory, and your name,
And you yourselves with me,

And how before my feet
All mortal things, like scatt'ring vapours, fleet.

What! think ye now I stand
All idly gazing here?
Mad ones! of what avail
To guile yourselves with wilful self-deceit,
If ye your sad defeat
Full soon must see, and ah! for ever wail?

Soon will the hour arrive,
When in full victory over you for ever
Triumphant I shall drive.
Then from its royal throne,
That in your eyes is spread,
Love will I sternly hurl.
And sadly there instead
Old age my pallid banners shall unfurl.

Then will I pluck amain
The sceptre of disdain
From the high hand of Pride, who in your breast
Sits, as a stately queen;
And on that very scene
Remorse will I invest

Who with the bitter story
Of joys departed, and departed glory,
Like an undying worm,
Shall gnaw for aye your withering souls infirm.

Then must ye at my mind,
As veers the whirling wind,
Change all your laws, and alter all your ways,
Quit song, and laugh, and praise,
The robes begemm'd and bright,
And all that riches, all that love, and wit
Can for your forms inspire—
I will make you all lay by,
In sign of your captivity,
As widow'd bride forsakes her gay attire.

Thus now to you I call;
That musing with yourselves
How all your gorgeous beauties droop and fall,
You may your pride abate,
So full of cruelty,
That counts unmeet, in its imperial state,
All earthly things before your feet to lie.

Then haste ye quick, and do

As gentle pity guides,
And reason counsels you!
Since still with hasty strides
I my eternal voyage must pursue.

Fly! fly! ye seasons fly!
Fly day, and night, and hours,
My rapid family!
The motion of whose powers,
The great Creator set eternally.
Sweep on the starry course
Of your old victories,
Up the oblique long pathway of the skies.

The feelings which the Carnival awakened for a moment, disappeared with the seriousness and penitence of Lent. He turned himself then, with all his heart and soul, to the study of theology, especially of St. Augustin, whose works, indeed, are admirably adapted to minister comfort to the "mind diseased." He had, he says, two special objects in these labours, first, that his way of life might not end only in

gloom and darkness; and sccondly, that he might correct his works, both in doctrine, and morality, and so both assure his own faith, and also be more profitable to others.

In the midst of these many occupations, he had further to bear, not only the importunate letters, but also the more importunate visits of innumerable intruders, who, from curiosity, or for the purposes of consultation, and criticism, kept flocking to his apartments. "In the court, in the hospital, in monasteries, he could not escape from them." He was, indeed, always gracious, and patient, and courteous toward all visitors in their presence. But one cannot help sympathising in his trouble, and admiring his proposed remedy, when he relieves his heart in his private letters to his friends.

"There would be no better cure for this annoyance," he says, "than a servant who could tell troublesome visitors from agreeable, as they judge melons, by the smell; who would

then exclude the former, declaring me not at home, or occupied in the service of his Highness; and who would, in the same way, open my letters, and only show me those which convey some gift, or promise, or good tidings, and burn all the rest, never suffering tidings of death, or other distress to meet my eyes, for they fill my mind with melancholy, and my ears with complaints."

For, notwithstanding all the advantages which he possessed at first, and these many occupations and friendships, Tasso could not long rest peacefully in Mantua; he felt too near Alfonso. He felt that he was only half-free. He felt that he was watched, and that he was a hanger on, who might any moment be cast off. He longed to be altogether at liberty and independent. He seems also to have had a restless desire of change, not unnatural after such confinement and such sufferings. He was likewise disappointed of

a visit, for which leave had been given him, to Marco de' Pii, Lord of Sassuolo, where he was to have met Ferrante Gonzaga, and other patrons and friends.

A return of his illness prevented him from going, and increased his melancholy. Duke William, indeed, gave him some consolation by taking him to a villa, called Marmirolo, where he met a pleasant society of cavaliers and ladies, and received many compliments and kind attentions. He was also promised an excursion to Florence, which city he was most anxious to visit, as well to see and admire it, as to pay his compliments and express his thankfulness to the Grand-Duke's family, and especially the Grand-Duchess, for her kind presents sent to him during his imprisonment, and her exertions to help forward his liberation. In this expectation he was disappointed a second time, as the Duke of Mantua was obliged, for state reasons, to go

to the Imperial Court, instead of visiting Florence.

He had presently another of his customary vexations. His great friend, Licino, published his "Discourses on the Art of Poetry," with a collection of his Letters, without his permission and knowledge. These he had been anxious to review, alter, and correct, before publication. Perhaps, also, he was again defrauded of the pecuniary return which he had expected from them. He expostulates earnestly with Licino on this injustice, and complains of it sorely to Scipio Gonzaga. He now, however, set himself to enlarge, and complete these Discourses, which were published afterwards in six books at Naples.

A visit from two of the principal Barons at Rome, the Caetani, nephews of the Cardinal Legate at Bologna, their friendliness and familiarity, and, perhaps, their invitations, seem to have turned and fixed his thoughts

and hopes on Rome; where, from this period, he was desirous of trying his fortune; perhaps, also of finding refuge, as the safest asylum from further danger and persecution.

This wish, however, was most probably a cause of needless disquiet for several years; for an offer was made him, about the same time, of the Ethical and Poetical chair in the Academy of the "Sleepers" (Addormentati) at Genoa, with a provision of four hundred crowns assured, and the probability of as much more besides. His good and wise friend, Angelo Grillo, procured him this offer, which was accompanied by a most flattering letter from the president of the Academy. Had he been able to accept this proposal, and could he have brought himself to settle down quietly in this comfortable situation, he might have been saved from the trials to which he was subsequently exposed.

He partly, it seems, shrunk from the charge, at least until his health should be re-established.

Partly he was uncertain whether he should be permitted to accept it, and was afraid to ask, lest his liberty should be further restricted. He was, however, allowed to visit his paternal city, Bergamo, as best adapted for the restoration of his strength. There all his noble relations, all his admiring fellow-citizens, assembled in crowds, to show every possible honour to their renowned compatriot. He could not any the more shake off his weakness and melancholy, and was glad to retire to one of the country houses of his family, a property named Zanga, a few miles from the city. Here amidst trees, hills, gardens, fountains, and shade, he had sufficient power and leisure to put the finishing stroke to his "Torrismondo."

In the July of this year, A.D. 1587, it was published in Bergamo. Such was the author's reputation, that in a few months it was reprinted ten times. Posterity, however, has ratified Tasso's own judgment, who did not much esteem it, and could never satisfy

himself that he had properly completed it, rather than the eulogies pronounced on it at the time and since repeated by several Italian critics. These it owed apparently more to the general fame of the bard, and the rarity of tragedy in Italy, till toward the close of the last century, than to the worth of the play itself. Indeed Tasso's genius was ill adapted for that style of poetry. In the "Jerusalem" he fails most in pathos and energy. His delineations of the passions, and their working, are the feeblest parts of his great epic. When then the whole poem, as in a tragedy, based on such a plot as that of the "Torrismondo," depends almost entirely on its success in representing the play of the passions in their wildest and stormiest mood; and, when tragedy requires vivid and condensed energy of thought and expression, more than any other class of poetry, it is not to be wondered at, that Tasso should have succeeded no better.

The choric parts of the drama, are as Sismondi thinks, the best. There is much beauty, and some energy in their versification and imagery. Tasso's powers as a "Canzoniere" were in them called into action. The concluding chorus describes his own condition in forcible language. But the long dull dialogue, its weariful and unseasonable descriptions, its lifeless passion, its cold anger, its sorrowless remorse, its sesquipedalian words, are freezing beyond expression.

Though Tasso enjoyed the view of his paternal country, his ancestral palaces and halls, the admiration of his citizens, and the friendship and caresses of his relatives, he could not banish from his mind the desire of a secure establishment, or the hope of attaining some post of distinction. His thoughts were centered in Rome; whither, indeed, the eyes and hopes of literary men naturally directed themselves, seeing airy castles of renown and

wealth, which were, however, but seldom realised by them in that city.

Bishop Papio, whom Tasso reckoned a great friend, was a favourite with the Pope's two nephews, the Montalti, much beloved by their uncle, and advanced by him rapidly, not to sovereign principalities, but to the highest posts of church and state in Rome itself; according to the milder and less dangerous form of nepotism introduced by Sixtus V. Tasso also put full confidence in the Cardinal Albano, and his secretary, Maurizio Cataneo, who had been, indeed, his chief confidant and comforter, and to whom he imparted all his secret feelings in his letters. He also expected much from the old friendship and affection of Scipio Gonzaga, now patriarch of Jerusalem, and soon afterwards advanced to the dignity of the Cardinalate.

The answers, however, to his urgent applications, from his patrons and friends, were,

with the exception of Gonzaga's, as discouraging as possible. Cardinal Albano entreated him to continue in the service of the Prince of Mantua, who so loved and esteemed him. Cataneo represented to him that he must first perfectly re-establish his reputation for wisdom and prudence, before he could expect any profitable employment.

Tasso's replies were somewhat discontented and angry. He was naturally offended with Cataneo for seeming to credit the lies and calumnies which were circulated against him, though, perhaps, he mentioned them with the kindest intention in reality. Tasso's purpose, however, was only delayed, by no means altered by these discouragements. His thoughts were still fixed on Rome. In the meanwhile he returned from the country to Bergamo for the great fair held there in August.

This used to be one of the richest and most splendid in Italy, when the fairs in her

chief cities were magnificent spectacles. From all quarters the rich merchants met together to exchange the commodities of the North, the South, the East, and the West. The Florentine, the Venetian and Ragusan traders displayed the produce of their voyages in gorgeous competition. Foreigners from every country, who regarded Italy as the *entrepôt* of all commerce, assembled to make purchases and provide their stock of Italian, Oriental and Indian goods, with which to enrich themselves on their return to their native shores. There were also gay shows and parties in the evening; and the banks of the Brembo and Serio resounded with conversation and minstrelsy, as the bright summer sunsets drew forth the festive throngs, to look out over the broad plains of Lombardy toward the south, or enjoy the cool airs from the shadowy Alpine heights on the north.

Tasso partook in these recreations for a short

time, and then prepared for his departure, having received a pressing letter from Angelo Grillo hastening his acceptance of the offers from Genoa, and promising him money for the journey, a proof, by the way, of Tasso's strait circumstances and uncomfortable state of dependance. He sent the letter to the Duke of Mantua's chancellor, requesting permission to leave Mantua, and asking also for some pecuniary assistance.

His usual ill-fortune interfered with his prospects. Duke William suddenly died. Vincenzo succeeded, and putting by his Genoese engagement, Tasso hastened to Mantua, most likely with high-wrought expectations of abundant kindness and liberality, from one who seemed so old and tried a friend as Vincenzo. He appeared, however, doomed to be the sport of disappointment. "Government shows the man," says the old Greek proverb. Vincenzo, perhaps not unnaturally, was so occupied in

affairs of state and the conduct of all those intricate webs of policy in which the Italian potentates were involved and delighted, that he could spare little time for Tasso's society, and less funds to assist his distress. The poor poet found himself excluded from his friendship and familiarity, and in great degree from his presence. He had yet more to suffer.

The blight of Tasso's affection, the insults heaped upon him, and the long bitter afflictions of his imprisonment had chastened his character in many points. He had endured much, and as his letters testify, had deeply repented of his youthful sins, and had long weaned himself altogether from the gallantry, as it is called, which is ever too lightly regarded, and which, deadly sin as it is, seemed at that time scarcely to interfere with devotion and a religious reputation. After Tasso's death, his confessor testified that, from the age of thirty-five,

he had not, to the best of his belief, been guilty of any mortal sin. He had also resolved to devote his powers, his learning and his Muse to the service of religion, and the purification of his heart. Deep, indeed, and solemn were the tones of repentance with which Tasso's harp at this time resounded. Adversity had fulfilled toward him one portion of its office.

But there was still one great fault remaining in his character, the secret cause of his unrest and disquietude, which was to plunge him into another sea of troubles, and make him now instead of a suffering prisoner, a wanderer and almost a beggar, before it was exorcized from his heart. This was his pride, a fault which he often laments in himself, not vanity or self-conceit, for no one was freer from these vices, but that deeper pride which makes obligations painful, which cannot submit to injury or to insult, which claims and

maintains the position to which it thinks itself entitled, and expects that every one else shall render it the same reverence. His noble birth, the position of his relations, his father's and his own renown, the admiration and applause which he met with, especially during his stay at Bergamo, had perhaps revived this feeling, and exalted it even above its usual pitch. The dependant situation in which he had lived, the baffled hope of regaining his maternal inheritance, the disappointment when defrauded of the fortune which he expected to have made by his "Jerusalem," the absolute want to which he was sometimes reduced, and the precarious bounty which at times relieved him, were well calculated to gall this sore.

When on his return to Mantua with such high-wrought expectations of, at last, attaining the position and glory which he had so long aimed at, he met unexpectedly with so much neglect, and could obtain no certain provision from what he fondly imagined was his, the

sovereign's special affection, he was stung to the quick in that tenderest point of feeling. He became more and more discontented with Mantua. His mind returned again more forcibly to its strong predilection for Rome. His ill-health, he thought, and apparently a secret disinclination, prevented him finally from accepting the flattering proposals from Genoa. He, therefore had a petition presented to the Duke, imploring permission to depart, and with many professions that he would always be at his disposal, requesting to be discharged from all restraint, and set completely at liberty.

The Duke returned no definite answer. He gave him, indeed, to understand that he should be sorry to lose his services, but would not forcibly prevent him from following his inclination. "I have leave," he says, "to depart; but no commandment, and no money. Such is the courtesy of his Serene Highness, that knowing me to be unfit for his service, he will not keep me against my will, and yet will not oblige

me to depart, nor give any provision for my journey, lest I should take the gift as a signal to leave."

When the Duke, from neglect, or from unwillingness to lose Tasso's services, or from fear of disobliging Alfonso, left him in a state of uncertainty, and hindered his departure in this underhand fashion, Tasso, with his usual energy, contrived to raise funds from his various friends, especially his relations at Bergamo, very scanty and limited indeed, but sufficient at least to begin his journey; and to the annoyance of the Duke, and the regret of the Duchess and their court, he started in the direction of Rome, on the 19th of October, A.D. 1587, with nothing but a valise full of clothes, a desk containing writings, and a few books. His immediate object and care was to fulfil the religious obligations, and perform the vows by which he had bound himself, that especially of a pilgrimage to Loreto.

His first resting-place on his journey was a celebrated Benedictine monastery on the road to Bologna, where he confessed and communicated with much devotion. The abbot and monks entertained him with the greatest kindness and respect. Thence he proceeded to Bologna, re-visiting one of the scenes of his youthful studies, calling to mind a thousand hopes and dreams of love, and glory, and ambition, which had peopled his vivid imagination during his former residence, and of which nothing remained but the melancholy dust and ashes.

He was honourably and affectionately received by his dear and faithful friend, Costantini. Giovanni Galeazzo Rossi, who was so fervent an admirer of his genius, as to have sent a painter to Mantua, expressly to take his portrait, was most anxious to be his host; and indeed, when he preferred Costantini, entertained them both at a splendid banquet, where he met a multitude of friends and admirers. Rossi, and

other friends, were also anxious to make him rich presents, which, notwithstanding his necessities, he absolutely and perseveringly refused; neither could their importunity overcome his repugnance.

On the 27th of October, he left Bologna, and resumed his penitential journey toward Loreto. His strength, however, and his means were exhausted, and he would have had the greatest difficulty in reaching his destination, had not Ferrante Gonzaga, travelling toward the same point with a gallant retinue, overtaken and relieved him, and almost forcibly carried him on in his company.

His feelings about this time he commemorates in the following sonnet:

Father of heaven, since gloomy tempests hide
The one right path, while wandering ways I trace
Athwart the quaking and unstable base
Of this world's tearful valley; guide, oh guide
My devious steps, that they no more rove wide!

Shed the sweet lustre of thy holy grace
On my dark heart, and ope before my face
The one blest road, I whilome left in pride!
Ah! ere chill winter o'er my forehead spread
Its hoary snows, ere the eternal glooms
Engulf the radiance of life's fleeting day,
Oh grant, as wing'd with swift celestial plumes,
I may bound back to thy salvation's way!
There feed me, Lord! there shelter Thou my head!

CHAPTER IV.

PILGRIMAGE TO LORETO.

LORETO stands on a picturesque eminence in the march of Ancona, overhanging the Adriatic. It is a fortified town of about seven thousand inhabitants, desolate and silent now, since pilgrimages, if we except that marvellous assembly to the Holy Coat of Treves, have almost gone out of date. A few of the lower classes occasionally resort thither still, and the pilgrims are supported by the charity of the city. It was very different in earlier ages, and in Tasso's time.

As late as the last century, the votaries were reckoned at between forty and fifty thousand annually; and then the place was continually crowded with throngs of pilgrims of all ranks, and classes, and ages. It held the most celebrated shrine in the whole of Europe. All western Christendom, "from those who drink the Ebro and the Tagus, to the cold floods of Ister, and the realms lying beneath the frozen pole, marched band by band with the peaceful olive,"* to perform their devotions at the sacred chapel. The shipwrecked mariner, saved from the deep, came to hang up his votive picture before the Star of the Sea, whose gracious appearance hushed the winds, and laid the waves, and wafted the sinking vessel into harbour, or gently drove the weltering plank with its fainting burden upon the sand. The mother came to return thanks to her, who had

* See Tasso's Canzone.

brought her safely through her dangers, and given her the smiling infant upon her bosom. The man once lame came to hang up his useless crutch, the cured soldier his bandage. Nobles and ladies, princes and princesses, brought silver and gold, and purple, and velvet, and jewels; for innumerable were the miracles of her who was worshipped in Loreto.

Every one knows the legend: how, when the miscreants of Mahomed burst like a deluge over the Holy Land, and were fiercely overrunning with their unclean hosts the ancient hills and valleys of Galilee, a troop of glittering angels came down, half in sorrow, half with jubilees, upon the sacred heights of Nazareth, and poising themselves in the sainted air, took up with firm, but reverential grasp, the famous house of the blessed Virgin, in which the Angel Gabriel had appeared to her with the heavenly Annunciation, and in which his words were fulfilled in the Conception. That its holy walls

might not be polluted by the unhallowed infidels, the angels raised it at once into the air, and winnowing the winds with their golden plumes, carried it rapidly, but steadily, over the blue waters of the glancing Mediterranean, past the sparkling islands that gem the Archipelago, over the "old poetic mountains" of Greece, till weary with their journey, they rested their burden for a while on Tersato, one of the romantic hills of Dalmatia.

On this stood a noble castle, whose lord might have become the fortunate possessor of the sacred building, which stood gleaming and blazing with celestial splendour for three years and a half, clothing the neighbouring mountains with rosy and golden flame, and shooting flashes of radiance far away over the tossing Adriatic. Dalmatia, however, seems not to have been so hospitable then as Sir Gardinor Wilkinson found it of late years. The lord of the castle rejected the wonderful guests.

Accordingly, after their long rest, the angels rose up again, and again towered in the air with the holy building in their hands. They flew straight across the Adriatic, and on December 10th, A.D. 1294, reached the Italian coast, and deposited their charge in a forest belonging to Recanati, about a thousand paces from the sea, and reverentially withdrew, leaving it glittering and flaming as before.

Eight months afterwards, it moved spontaneously nearer to Recanati, and then to a field on a hill belonging to a noble lady named Laureta (whence the name of Loreto) famous, or rather infamous, as the haunt of two celebrated robbers, who were brothers, but at enmity with one another, from whence it never moved any more.

The criminals saw it. They flung down their arms, and were marvellously converted. The tidings spread abroad. Every one heard, and wondered. Countless miracles were

wrought; and although in what way is not recorded, it was plainly, at last, understood to be the Holiest House from Nazareth. Moreover, there was in it an image. This image was that of a Negress, and about four feet high, made of cedar-wood, and dressed in a red camlet cloak. But it was, most undoubtedly, that of the Virgin; the very image which St. Luke made (besides the picture which he painted) with the Holy Child in its arms.

The house, to faithful eyes, was built of the reddish gray rock, which abounds near Nazareth; though to others, the materials bear a marvellous resemblance to the common Italian tile. It was encrusted, or cased over, with marble, which, however, always shrunk from actual contact with the holier original stone. It was consecrated as a sacred chapel, and divided into two parts by a silver rail, and net-work with silver doors. In front of the net-work, was the altar, so low that the image could

be seen behind over it. In this exterior and larger portion of the chapel hung thirty-seven lamps of silver, some of them of enormous weight. The inner portion was plated with silver, and contained seventeen lamps of gold, burning before the image, which stood over the hearth where the Virgin used to cook. The camlet cloak was taken off the image, and hung up devoutly in a closet prepared for it, where it is still to be seen, together with the gown which the Virgin wore when alive. Instead of such a simple apparel, the figure, with that of the child, was dressed in the brightest, and gayest brocades, and satins, and velvets, stiff with gold, and pearls, and all manner of precious stones. A multitude of such vestments were collected in its wardrobe, and innumerable are the changes of dress, which it undergoes at the hands of the priests, who superintend its toilet.

Afterwards, Alexander VI., and Julius II.,

shewed particular devotion toward the House; and a large church, in the form of a cross, was built by Bramante over it, with a dome in the centre, under which the chapel stands. This also was soon filled with devotional offerings, and is rich in mosaics, and pictures, and works of art.

But the treasury attached to it was the richest of all. Incalculable was the amount and value of golden and silver vessels, and chalices, and censors, and chains, of splendid tissues and stuffs for the priests and for the image, of cameos, and intaglios, of diamonds, and rubies, and emeralds, and other gems, rapidly accumulated by the prodigal superstition of Europe, and the splendid rivalry in munificence, and devotion, of the wealthy princes, nobles, merchants, and cities of Italy. Here also were other treasures, the earthenware cup, in which the Holy Family drank, and the sacred basin, or pot of iron for cooking,

in which rosaries, or Agnus-Deis, or crosses, were moved to and fro by the priests, receiving, from this ceremony, wonderful powers of blunting weapons in battle, of counteracting poisons, of making travail-pangs easy, of ensuring fruitfulness and long-life. Here also was the marvellous and beautiful pearl found, at the beginning, in the chapel, with a soft, shining picture of the Annunciation upon it, distinctly visible to those eyes which had seen the stone of Palestine in the brick-like looking walls of the house.

This vast treasure was supposed to be under supernatural protection, which kept off the Turkish corsairs, and all other enemies. It was, however, seized and plundered by the French, who were, nevertheless, marvellously disappointed in the spoil; whether the most valuable jewels, and other curiosities, had been previously, or were at the time, exchanged for false articles, or whether they were otherwise

concealed, it would be difficult to determine. It is now reckoned worth about £200,000.

There was, and indeed still is, provision made for receiving confessions in every Christian language, a regular circle also of devotions, and services for the pilgrims, and a multitude of pardons and indulgences annexed to them. Before the church is a grand square, surrounded by the governor's and bishop's palaces, and the residences of the canons and penitentiaries. The city was full of inns and hostelries, and, as was usual with places of pilgrimage, was rather noted for its noise and immorality; for often, the votaries, after the appointed penitences and ceremonies were fulfilled, made up for the self-denial and toil of the journey, by indulgence in all kinds of gaiety and revelling. It was in general a strange scene of mingled solemnity and frivolity, devotion and dissipation.

Tasso, however, was sincere in his penitence, and thoroughly in earnest in his pilgrimage.

Fearful as it is to perceive how much the Blessed Virgin is regarded, even by such a man, as the object of confidence, the fountain of grace, the great trust and consolation of the afflicted, it is impossible to help feeling the deep resolution and seriousness with which he implores her all-powerful intercession, and the devoutness and reality with which he henceforth consecrates his energies and life to the service of religion. Neither in him do we perceive what is too often discernible as an accompaniment of the former opinion, that awful view of the Saviour as only a severe and terrible judge, who must not be approached or appealed to directly, and to soften whose rigorous and unbending justice, the soft prayers and tears, not to say commands of the Virgin mother are needed. In other verses, and other writings, and evidently in his life, he turns his gaze, and pours out his soul, whither the Scriptures and the early church direct our whole

trust. With apparently the most fervent contrition, faith, and love, he seeks the mediation and cleaves to the atonement of Him, who took our nature into His, that He might fulfil those offices toward us, and that we might be able and have confidence to come unto Himself. One hopes that this faith will be accepted, and for it the other misbelief forgiven.

At this time therefore, in strains beautiful and harmonious, full of deep pathos and sublimity, though awful and painful for the doctrine which they imply, the poet confesses and laments the many sins of his past life; acknowledges the justice of his chastisements and afflictions; proclaims his repentance and the changed purpose of his heart; bewails in striking terms his present corruption and weakness, and entreats that Mary's purifying compassion may wash him in his penitent and ever-springing tears.

In Loreto then Tasso confessed and com-

municated repeatedly, observing all the customary devotions with the utmost strictness and self-renunciation. He had entered the city wayworn and penniless. The kindness of Ferrante Gonzaga had alone enabled him to reach it. And when there, he would have been reduced to the last degree of destitution, had not the Governor of the place, and Giulio Amici, a noble citizen, hearing of his presence, hastened to hunt him out among the crowd, and offer him lodgings and hospitable entertainment, and every advantage and opportunity for performing his devotions. It seemed as if he could scarcely tear himself from the sanctuary, so intent was he on performing his vows, and showing his thankfulness to Her, who had appeared to him in the darkness and desolation of his imprisonment, melancholy, illness, and despair, and obtained his recovery by her prevailing intercessions.

This Amici moreover did not limit his kindness to assisting Tasso on the spot. He provided him with a good horse and a sufficiency of funds, that he might resume his journey toward Rome, where he arrived safely four days after leaving Loreto. The following canzone records his feelings in that city. It is entitled—

TO THE MOST BLESSED VIRGIN OF LORETO.

Mid the fierce winds, and rough tempestuous night
Of this so vast illimitable main,
O holy star! thy soft pellucid light,
Which warms, and gilds men's hearts, hath guided me
Here, where thy beams in sparkling glory rain
Sweet comfort o'er the mind's wild agony,
Mid that loud storm where founders many a heart;
Shewing with silver ray
Salvation's opening way,
Each girdling shore, the compass, and the port

Of life's wild sea, where scarce the o'erladen soul
With anguish rides
The tossing tides;
Yea, oft goes down—the billows o'er it roll.

Warm o'er my heart, sweet star! thy splendours run,
Star! whence was born the Everlasting Light,
Light of the Uncreate Supremest Sun,
The Sun which sets not. From long wandering ways
Thou call'st me back, and guid'st me to the height,
Where fair enthron'd upon its marble base
Thy lowly House earth worships and adores,
Laden with woes and shames—
See! there before me flames
The sacred mount, while loud my spirit roars,
Oppress'd with sorrow's weight, weary and worn;
Nor pants, nor tries
More 'gainst the skies
To rear on hills of pride the tower of scorn.

Ah! in what peaks, what heav'n-assaulting heights
Of senseless wisdom, and of strengthless power
The dizzy frenzy of the proud delights!

Haste, wand'ring soul, that know'st the headlong fall
Of men and angels, fold thy wing, and cower
Here, where more safe, and holier patterns call.
Here come, and weep thy sad wild waste of years,
When thou did'st dream to heap
Ossa on Pelion's steep.
Here melt, oh heart! in penitential tears.
From virtue on to virtue, steep and high,
Here God hath show'd
The glorious road.
Know'st thou the way? It is humility.

The Holy House here angels rear'd of yore,
The House of Mary, and her holy Child:
It o'er the clouds, and o'er the waves they bore.
Great miracle! to which my mind I strain,
Once bound to earth, oppress'd, and dust defil'd,
Under the burden of its worldly pain.
This is the mount, where glitt'ring, like the morn,
Heav'n's care thy walls hath plac'd,
Oh Virgin pure, and chaste
Before thy Babe, and since, and when 'twas born.
See! Atlas scorns his crown'd empyrean dome,

Envying the lot
Of this poor cot,
The King of Kings, and thy terrestrial home.

Oh, Virgin! if with lips as yet unclean,
In gall and absynth dipp'd and steep'd, thy name
I am unmeet to chaunt—Oh grant me, Queen!
Sorrow instead of song. Tears, gushing tears,
Thy mercy's dearest, holiest gift, I claim;
Which oft returning from the heav'nly spheres
In peace, and pardon, on the spirit fall.
Ah! weeping, may I gain,
What singing, I had fain!
Reject not thou my agonising call!
Behold where wallowing 'mid my sins I tire,
Struggling at need,
As rolls the steed
In the deep dust, or in the clinging mire.

Lady of heaven! Oh Virgin, Mother, Queen
Wash me in mine own cries!
That I through thee may rise
From my deep gulf of rotting, cleaving sin,

Ascending till thy glorious light appears
Before this earthly clay,
Up in the day.
Of the irradiate spheres.

CHAPTER V.

STAY AT ROME.

Tasso's heart seems to have beat high as he entered Rome. How many hearts did so! What was there to which any one might not aspire; what soaring ambition had not often attained its goal there? How many had resorted thither, poor, unknown, unregarded, and had afterwards emerged by degrees to the high places of earth; had become nobles, princes, cardinals, popes; had swayed the destinies of empires, and made monarchs and nations tremble?

Every one had heard after-ages recount how the chips of wood in the shop of Hildebrand's father had framed themselves spontaneously into the Psalmist's prophecy: "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth," and how in due time the prediction, according to the received interpretation, was marvellously accomplished in his popedom.

Men told how, in later times, a poor youth journeying on foot, was asked for what reason he was going to Rome, and replied, that it was to be Pope, and how in course of time he wore the tiara, under the title of John XXIII. And, to pass over other striking instances, who did not know that of the late Popes, Pius IV. had been but a lowly Milanese student, the son of a farmer of taxes in that city; that Pius V. had been a poor begging friar, and on his first arrival at Rome, had only obtained the office of commissary to the In-

quisition? Gregory XIII. had been a jurist at Bologna. These had all been great Popes. Sixtus V., himself, the Pope then reigning with the highest renown and universal admiration, had once been a herd-boy. His father, sprung from a Sclavonian fugitive, and expelled from Montalto for debt, had married a gardener's widow near Fermo. He dreamed one night that he heard a heavenly voice announcing a son who should more than comfort him for all his afflictions. He named him, therefore, Felix, the Fortunate. In due time the fortune came. From borrowing other herd-boys' horn-books, because unable to provide them for himself, he rose through the usual steps to the triple crown, which he wore to the admiration of the world:

Et le pâtre de Montalte est le rival des rois.

What bright dreams, then, might not float before men's imaginations when they turned

their faces toward the Great City! What visions of distinction may have presented themselves to such an ardent fancy as Tasso's! Endowed with such qualities; possessed of such learning; arrayed with such renown, capable of such industry, thrilling with such devotion, and seconded, as he imagined, by many powerful and important friends, some of the Sacred College, and some in places of trust about the members of the College, and others in the confidence of the Pope's nephews, it is not to be wondered at, that his eyes were thus long and eagerly fixed on Rome, or that his pulses beat high when he rode through the streets of the world's metropolis, as men deemed it, and alighted at last at the palace of his dear friend and patron Scipio Gonzaga, Patriarch of Jerusalem.

Rome's mediæval greatness had sunk in great measure during the long absence of the Popes at Avignon, the Babylonish Captivity,

as the Italian authors name it. The inhabitants became uncivilized, the ancient remains, and the later buildings were moss-grown, tottering and dilapidated. The population had diminished till the city was half desolate. Eugenius IV. and the Popes who succeeded him, especially Julius II. and Leo X., with the assistance of Michael-Angelo and Raphael, had recovered it in great measure from this mournful desolation, and adorned it with its most splendid modern monuments. The plague, the sack of the city, the troubles under Paul IV. retarded the work, or rather threw it back many steps. The following Popes carried on the work again. Sixtus V. in great measure completed it. Comparatively little has been done since his time. He delighted in building. He "loved to see many roofs." He rebuilt the Lateran Palace, much as it is at present. He laid out the Via and Borgo Felice. He made the great

flight of marble steps which leads up to the Pincian Hill from the Piazza di Spagna. He made those streets which lead to Santa Maria Maggiore; and opened the Chapel of the Presepio in that church. He set up four obelisks, two of great size, that especially in front of St. Peter's, with extraordinary pomp and exultation. He restored the pillars of Trajan and Antoninus, and set the statues of St. Peter and St. Paul upon their summits. He erected large fulling-mills for cloth, and a hospital, which he richly endowed, for the reception of two thousand patients. He provided the great Vatican library for the fit reception of its enormous treasures. He finished the cupola of St. Peter's, all at least except the leaden roof, in two-and-twenty months, the architect having required ten years.

Perhaps the greatest work, and that which was most celebrated, was the introduction of the waters of the Acqua Martia into Rome.

These he brought twenty miles from the Agro Colonna, on acqueducts and through tunnels, to be distributed over great part of the city, and to gush out especially in the splendid fountain of the Quirinal, adorned with the famous statue of Moses striking the rock with his rod, which he called the "Acqua Felice," after his own name.

He seemed, indeed, half inclined to be as great a destroyer as builder. He did demolish the Septizonium of Severus, and take down Trajan's urn, and the statue of Antoninus, to make room for the figures of the Apostles. He threatened the tomb of Cecilia Metella, the Laocoon and the Apollo. Happily, he was diverted, though with great difficulty, from these destructive projects.

His architectural exertions answered a secondary purpose. They employed labour, and repeopled the city, whose population rose rapidly to a hundred thousand, from scarcely half

that number. His care extended to the provinces, to the destruction of banditti, the promotion of agriculture, the draining of marshes, the enlarging of towns, the encouragement of trade and commerce.

Besides these labours for the benefit of the city and his state, he toiled most assiduously in amassing an enormous treasure, though not so much from avarice, as for what he deemed the great interests of Christendom. He was, in some points, a diligent patron of learning and literature. He set apart much time for personal devotion. And yet, in addition to all these active employments, (for he monopolized business, and concentrated the direction of every matter, civil and ecclesiastical, in himself), his mind teemed continually with numberless and boundless schemes, which lives would have been insufficient to carry out. His cardinals and officers were, for the most part, men of great distinction,

devotion and energy, some of the deepest learning, some practical men of business or statesmen.

Such was the court to which Tasso came, full of hope and expectation. No one could in general succeed there without good introductions; but these he seemed to be provided with. At first, therefore, he was most kindly and graciously welcomed. Caresses, applauses, promises, were showered upon him, by cardinals, prelates, and princes. Gonzaga, his host, appeared most affectionately disposed toward him. Papio introduced him to the Pope's two nephews, or rather grand-nephews, one of whom, Alessandro, had been advanced to the Cardinalate in his fourteenth year, and was called the Cardinal Montalto; the other, Michele, had been made Marquis of Incisa, that he might be the founder of the family, according to the usual practice of Popes to have one relation on whom to shower ecclesiastical, a second

on whom to confer civil dignities and emoluments.

Several other members of the Consistory showed him much attention. He celebrated their worth; he chaunted the praises of the Pope, his successes in pacifying the states of the Church, in adorning Rome, in promoting the interests of religion, in introducing the Acqua Felice, with much elegant and sonorous flattery, describing especially how the clear waters came gliding in with silent hidden footsteps, till they sprang out into daylight in the heart of the Eternal City, amidst the congratulations of the delighted citizens. The numberless works and projects of Sixtus furnished numberless themes to the poet's muse. The sky flushed with hope.

"I find Rome beautiful and courteous," he writes, in an outburst of satisfaction, on the 4th of November, "as I had always thought. All has hitherto come to pass as I expected.

May it please the Lord that I should obtain some favour beyond my expectations, and the anticipations of other men! Meanwhile, I am consoling myself with the favours which I receive daily from these most illustrious lords. And I think this must be my resting-place; I know not for how long indeed, but at all events for the present, my resting-place."

His ancient longings, he tells Licino, were satisfied with the aspect of the city. He had no further wish, save that his friends and relations, both far off and on the spot, would assist him all they could to obtain an independent establishment.

Poor Tasso! This was now the natural and moderate summit of his wishes—to be delivered from the miserable condition of a hanger-on upon courts—to be his own master. But this he could never reach. Nothing in Rome was to be had for nothing. The "Omnia Romæ Venalia" of the old stern African was still true.

Every one there was engaged in pushing his own fortune. All looked, as in Saint Bernard's time, "more to the hand than to the mouth of the law-giver."

Papio would not present Tasso to the Pope. The Pope was too full of those innumerable labours, and unbounded dreams which Tasso sang, to have leisure for remembering or sending for him. The Cardinal Albano, and Cataneo, his secretary, were offended with his coming to Rome against their advice. Cardinal Montalto, for whom he invented two coats of arms, gave him thanks, but nothing more. All the Cardinals and great men whom he praised, praised him in return, and there stopped.

A certain Giorgio Alario, Gonzaga's steward, wanted at first to play the master and patron over him; and when Tasso maintained his dignity, set himself in every way to vex and annoy the poor melancholy inmate of his lord's palace, and even at last banished him from it, as

Tasso judged, without Gonzaga's knowledge and permission. That prelate, however, although advanced to the Cardinalate in the winter, received this dignity too late for Tasso's advantage. His old affection seems to have cooled down most unseasonably in the selfish atmosphere around him, or perhaps from the envious suggestions of Alario and his other menials.

Costantini, Tasso's great friend, came to Rome, and revived his spirit for awhile, so that, with his encouragement, he finished, and offered to the Pope those fine outbreaks of poetry, which were mentioned above, on Sixtus himself, on his fountains, on the Chapel of the Presepio (the Holy Stable) opened in Santa Maria Maggiore. They were graciously accepted, and loudly admired. Still nothing more was done. He had hoped at first for some settled and profitable post, of which there were innumerable in Rome; then for a private admission to the Pope, in order to impart his griefs to him, and

consult with him about the welfare of his soul; then for at least a public audience, where he might be addressed amongst other courtiers.

But how could the poor, sick, melancholy poet obtain notice amidst the mighty crush of interests, and ambitions, concentered in that city, "amidst cardinals, ambassadors, prelates, princes, public and secret possessors of power, full of ceremony, for which Rome was classic ground; full of professions of attachment and obedience, but thoughtfully selfish; all ever greedily bent on attaining some object, effecting some purpose, gaining some advantage from others."* On the 22nd of November, he writes —in so short a time had the gay bubbles of imagination burst: "I am in Rome, where, with incredible pain, I see my many hopes all ending in nothing. I am, therefore, in extreme anxiety, not to say despair, about myself; and

* Ranke's Popes.

so much the more, since I am compelled again to turn courtier, a business whose very name I abhor, and how much more its effects. But I will sooner withdraw into some wilderness, so weary am I of courts, and of the world."

To these vexatious disappointments, turning the heart sick, was added a return of his old alarm. He heard that the Duke of Ferrara had expostulated with the Duke of Mantua on his being permitted to go free and at large against the conditions of his liberation. Serassi suggests, but without any authority, that this was a trick of Alario's to scare away the object of his dislike. It seems much more natural to suppose the alarm well-grounded. Alfonso was noted for never forgetting an injury. Now if he imagined, with or without evidence, that Tasso was guilty of the offence with which he was charged, his conduct and history warned the poet that it was safer to be as far from him as possible.

"I know the Duke," says Tasso, "by

natural inclination to be much disposed toward malignity, and full of a certain ambitious haughtiness, derived from the nobility of his blood, and the opinion of his own worth, the falsehood of which may easily be discovered in many instances."

In both these points, malignity, and haughtiness, he had given the deadliest offence, and he had suffered for so doing. Well then might he be alarmed at the slightest apprehension of any new personal restraint, or of being brought again into the neighbourhood of Ferrara.

Wherefore, although for a moment his prospects in Rome seemed brightening, as the Cardinal Datary, whose office and interest with the Pope made him one of the most influential men in the city, appeared inclined to befriend him, and procured his admission to a public audience of the Pontiff, when a further delay took place, he could no longer endure the discomforts of these continued disappointments, insults,

poverty, and fear acting on a sensitive mind and delicate state of health, but as a kind of desperate resource, resolved to betake himself to Naples. There, he proposed to refresh himself with the salubrity of his natal air, and enjoy the society of his sister, and her husband, and other friends; and also endeavour to recover his maternal inheritance, the dowry of which her relatives had defrauded his father, and himself.

"To make a man perfect," said Tasso, "three things are necessary, and will sharpen his wits sufficiently, a love-suit, an enemy, a law-suit. Comacchio gave me the first (here he first, probably, became enamoured of Leonora), Ferrara the second, Naples the third." The first two steps in his education had, certainly, cost him dear. He was now to take the third, and pay for it heavily in the vexations and annoyances, of protracted litigation.

Through his friends at Naples, especially through Gianbatista Manso, hitherto only ac-

quainted with him by letter, and fame, but a most devout admirer, and through the intercessions of the Empress of Austria, he had obtained full permission from the Conde di Miranda, Viceroy of Naples, to return to that city. His sentence of condemnation was cancelled; and he was assured that no remembrance of it should interfere with his recovering his mother's dower, and even his father's confiscated property, if the courts of justice should decide in his favour.

Before leaving Rome, he endeavoured to have his books, and other goods, forwarded to him from Modena, and Mantua. In the latter place, many delays were made. He had been four months in Rome, and had not received them, notwithstanding his urgent remonstrances, especially in asking for his books, "which," he cries, "I value as my life." He feared that the Duke would detain them in Mantua, as a pledge of his return. Wherefore, unable to

bear any further suspense, he left directions with Cataneo at Rome, and with Costantini at Bologna, to expedite their passage on the first opportunity; and half destitute, and in weak health, on the 5th of March, he started hastily for Naples.

CHAPTER VI.

STAY AT NAPLES—RETURN TO ROME—POVERTY.

THERE could not, perhaps, be a spot more favourable, as far as scenery is concerned, for the recovery of tranquillity, and health, than that to which Tasso repaired. The Neapolitan monastery of M. Olivet — the order of M. Olivet, under the Benedictine rule, was founded by John of Siena, in A.D. 1319, and established, after some difficulties, by Pope John XXII., and rapidly obtained possessions and houses throughout Italy, and elsewhere—stood

on the north side of the city, on a steep declivity, or rather precipice of tufo and chalk, parted off from the hill that rises behind the city, by a narrow but deep glen, or dell, down which a little rivulet danced gaily, precipitating itself, under a bridge, into the dark channel below, down which it flowed onward toward the sea, till it lost itself on the beach. The hill, on which it stood, was long and narrow, covered with pines, and firs, and cypresses, olives, and vines. The buildings were large, and stately. The gardens were full of bright flowers, especially of red and white roses.

The busy hum of the restless city, the distant songs of the merry populace, the gurgling of the rill, the rustling of the trees, the music of the birds, the murmur of the sea, the chimes of the convent bells, and the low echo of their services, were well adapted to soothe the wounded spirit through the ear. And the glorious prospect of the bay of Naples,

the sunbeams filling the heavens above, the water beneath expanding like a vast molten sapphire, the white latteen sails glancing to and fro during the day, and by night, the stars studding the ebon vault, and the fishing-boats rocking softly, with the blazing torches in their stern streaming long lines of fiery splendour athwart the dark purple waters, like the memories of noble deeds down the gloomy annals of history; such a prospect seen under the waving shade, or through the motionless stems of the old trees, the glow-worms shining on the grassy banks, and the moon pouring showers of silver radiance on the convent walls, and domes, or bursting through the thick masses of foliage, and lighting up the white dresses of the monks, gliding, like ghosts, to and fro, with the noiseless step, and swinging motion, which that class of people acquire, were no less suited to shed balm through the eye.

Hither then Tasso hastened. Here he was kindly welcomed by the inmates of the monastery, who had been prepared for his arrival by Niccolo Oddi, abbot of their congregation in Padua. Immediately all the learned world of Naples came pouring up to M. Olivet to salute, and do honour to the great poet, whom they looked upon as their compatriot. From several of the nobility, he received pressing invitations to partake of their hospitality, accompanied with many flattering compliments, and rich presents. The Abate Polverino, the young Count of Paleno, and Manso Marchese della Villa, were the most earnest and attentive in their offers, and services. The latter nobleman in particular, having long idolized the fame, now became even more attached to the person of Tasso. Nothing could exceed his readiness, his thoughtfulness in every particular, which could conduce to the comfort of his friend; nothing could equal the reverence, the humility with

which he listened to the poet, and philosopher.

Here then, soothed by the pleasantness of the situation, the purity of the air, and all the charms of his dwelling; and by the universal attention paid him, Tasso breathed once more. Here he resolved to rest himself awhile, and to consult fresh physicians for the restoration of his health, and take the advice of lawyers for the recovery of his property. The former gave him no great encouragement. Indeed, though certainly ailing and weak, there seems to have been no definite disorder which would admit of cure. The other learned faculty gave him more encouragement. Indeed, it is a general rule with the long robe in Italy, perhaps elsewhere also, by no means to discourage the commencement of litigation.

"All tell me," writes Tasso, "that I shall certainly recover my mother's dowry, and indeed my

father's property besides. All the advocates promise that I shall succeed without fail." Poor Tasso! the third part of his education was beginning. He had had his lovesuit—he had had his enemy. They had taught him much. He was now entering the lawsuit: "Facilis descensus."

He claimed about 3,500 ducats, as his mother's dowry; and about the same, as the value of his father's property, illegally, it was affirmed, confiscated by the treasury. He was armed, beside his counsel, with an excommunication from the Pope against the unjust occupants of his maternal inheritance. But the first difficulty was to find out who had obtained possession of it. This, for some time, he was unable to discover. To forward his second claim, at least with any speed, he had not sufficient interest with the Spanish Court or the Viceroy.

Once more, to reiterate the oft-told tale, in this new endeavour to establish his fortune,

was Tasso doomed to see high wrought expectations gradually dwindle away, and the gorgeous visions of his vivid imagination grow paler and dimmer every day before the unkind touch of truth. "I came," he says, "to Naples, in the hopes of recovering my property and my health. But, having gained nothing in fortune, I have rather lost in health; and fear, indeed, to lose what remains to me of it with life itself."

However, notwithstanding these natural complaints, the four or five months which Tasso stayed in Mount Olivet, seem to have glided by more pleasantly and gently than any portions of his previous life. He resolutely, for that space of time, refused the numerous invitations which he received. He was unwilling to attach himself any more to any great man's train. And he did not at first understand the real friendship and affection that was offered him by the Neapolitan noblemen, especially

by Manso, whose true friendship he subsequently laments had been unknown to him for so many years.

His abode in the monastery enabled him to select his visitors, and admit only those who were likely to be really entertaining or useful. Its cloisters and gardens were a safe retirement when he needed it; and the monks were so kind and attentive, that he can hardly find words of sufficient thankfulness. Occasionally his friends would entice him forth. Manso, perhaps, would drive him out along the bay. The universal esteem and respect which he met, could not but contribute to allay his melancholy.

"Torquato," writes the Neapolitan Manso, with hearty and natural admiration of his country, "was delighted above measure with the sweetness of the sky; which never was cold enough, even in midwinter, to require a fire; nor so cloudy, but that, however much

it rained, the warm rays of the sun would burst out frequently through the clouds. He was charmed with the level spread of the plains, the pleasantness of the hills on which the city is built, with such wonderful exertion of nature's skill, that while level throughout, it yet is elevated in such a way, one part above the other, that on all sides it enjoys the prospect of the sea spread before it to the south.* The encircling hills, which defend it from the north wind; the broad plains which open towards the east; the verdure of the celebrated hill of Posilippo, which lies on the west; all which objects, both by their wonderful variety, and contrast with one another, and also for the individual excellence of each, afford opportunities for delightful excursions all round the city, and for villas and resting places of unspeakable beauty,

* This expression is rather puzzling, but it is the Marquis's fault.

suited for each particular season of the year; were continually contemplated and frequented by Tasso with unbounded pleasure.

"Sometimes he wandered along the glorious shores of the sea, which makes as it were a goblet to the city; surrounded on the right by the fields and cliffs, renowned for the tombs of Virgil and Sanazzarro; for the grotto of Lucullus, for the villa of Cicero, for the stagnant and boiling waters of Cumæ, for the fires of Pozzuoli—fields shut in by the mountains of Baiæ, the promontory of Miseno, the island of Ischia, not less famous for the fables of Typheus than for its own fertility—and on the left by the cliffs celebrated for the sepulchre of Parthenope; for the subterranean channels of Arethusa; for the gardens of Pompey; for the fresh streams of the Sebeto; for the eruptions of Vesuvius; and by Monte Gauro, and the promontory of Minerva, and by the island of Capri, which

concealed the luxuries and impurities of Tiberius."

"He praised the height of the walls, which terrified of old the victorious Hannibal; the strength of the castles, miracles both for situation and art; one towering on the summit of the mountain, the second in the open plain, he third within jutting out into the depths of the sea. Within the circuit of the city, so large that at no elevation can the eye embrace the whole at once, he admired the straightness and length of the streets, the size of the squarès, the diversity and abundance of the fountains, the magnificence of the public and private edifices, the concourse of foreign nations, the innumerable population, the splendour of the cavaliers, the number of the princes.

"He examined, with the greatest delight, the abundance of domestic and foreign merchandise; the extreme plenty of all the neces-

saries and superfluities of life; above all, the multitude and variety of wines and fruits, and the vines and flowers, even in the depth of winter, budding and blossoming; and the fruits, new and old, hanging on the same tree, and turning the year as it were into one long autumn and spring united. With still greater wonder and pleasure he considered the excellency of the city in all acquirements and arts, especially in all knightly exercises, of which he was always a worshipper."

Such are the perhaps, somewhat hyperbolical raptures; (though, indeed, as to beauty and pleasantness, it is difficult to avoid raving about Naples,) which Tasso's courtesy poured into Manso's ears, or which Manso's patriotism put into Tasso's mouth. And for a short time, indeed, he seems to have grown composed, to have found unwonted ease, both in body and mind; so that, as before at Ferrara, at Mantua, and Rome, in the beginning

of his stay, he persuades himself that he has found a home, and declares: "I have returned to a city, which, being my country, ought to be the boundary and goal of my wanderings, and my resting place from my labours. To my happiness in Naples nothing is wanting save your presence, and that of father Angelo Grillo."

His mind, however, seems really to have gained strength in the quiet and shade of the monastery. Its tone was improved afterwards; there was perhaps not much less melancholy, but less discontent, less unhappiness. There was not indeed repose, for in his circumstances that was scarcely possible, but more separation from the world, more resignation, in short, more faith.

Here he began to carry into execution a not very fortunate idea, which he had formed at Mantua, of altering and in part recomposing his "Jerusalem." He had indeed already

commenced the work at Rome, but the tranquillity of his present sojourn enabled him to labour with greater diligence, and he had soon composed two hundred stanzas, which, in the beginning of July, he read out to his admiring auditors in the cloister, or garden shade of the beautiful monastery. He was, however, interrupted, not only by divers complimentary sonnets, in which he had to reply to the poetical compliments with which he was pelted, but by a request of the congregation, that he would write something in honour of their order.

It was a trying demand to one so busy and occupied, in the midst of such continued weakness, as Tasso. He was, however, far too kind and grateful to give them a refusal. Laying by all the various works in which he was engaged, composing, reviewing, and correcting, he devoted himself sedulously to the celebration of the foundation of their order. The work is entitled "Il Principio di Monte Oliveto." One

book only was finished, containing about two hundred stanzas in ottava rima. It relates how, in A.D. 1312, John Tolomei, of Siena, having lost his sight, recovered it by prayer, and resolved to devote himself to a religious life, and retired with two companions (Patrizio Patrizi and Ambrogio Piccolomini) to a cell in the mountain. It describes the visions of angels, the flaming stairs into the heavenly courts, the appearances of the Virgin, and the miraculous charges given him, the building of the house, the spread of the order, the accusations brought against it, and the favourable sentence of the Pope.

Parts of it are fine as a religious poem, calling away from the sins, and temptations, and vanities of the world. Tasso's own heart seems to discharge itself earnestly in the healed man's solemn aud pathetic denunciations of the misery and disquietude of an earthly life. We see the feelings of devotion growing and

strengthening more and more in the writer, as he draws onward toward his end.

He was not, however, to find repose yet. He began to fear that he was burdening the monks with his presence and melancholy. His restlessness once more bestirred itself. His friends, too, were very importunate in the invitations which they poured on him. To one of them, the Count of Paleno, a most vehement young gentleman apparently, he at last promised a visit. The youth rushed home in an ecstacy of delight to have apartments prepared close to his own for his long-desired guest. His father, however, the Prince of Conca, dashed his enthusiasm, by an absolute refusal to admit Tasso into his house. He feared, it was supposed, to receive one who had been declared a rebel, and no persuasions, or even upbraidings of his son could move him.

Tasso, with his usual kindness, that he might

not be a cause of contention between father and son, determined to remove from Naples for a season, and accepted an invitation of Manso's to a castle of his at Bisaccio, a small town in the Abruzzi mountains. Probably his medical advisers encouraged this change. Here Tasso sought relaxation and health in the sports of the field, for which, as an accomplished cavalier, he had always a predilection. He had often in former times been a companion of the princes of Ferrara, when they indulged themselves in these amusements, a great privilege and proof of regard from those jealous sovereigns, whose game laws were stricter and more rigidly executed than those of our Norman monarchs. He was, therefore, an expert ally for the Marquis, when, in the wild rocky heights and glens which surrounded Bisaccio, he went out to the chase of the roe or the wild boar. When it was fine, they spent the day in these excursions.

In the evenings, or in wet weather, the Marquis filled his old baronial halls with his friends and tenants, for he lived apparently on the pleasantest terms among them, or with the improvisatori and improvisatrici, for whom the province of Apulia was, and is, famous, and whiled the time away with dances and singing, or with listening to the extemporaneous effusions of those bards, male and female, as accompanied by the harp or sampogna, or other musical instrument, they poured out in gay rivalry their facile streams of poetry, sometimes perhaps from mere liveliness and natural inspiration, sometimes for a prize, the spoil of the day's chase, or a boddice or jewel offered by their hospitable lord. More often the pair withdrew to enjoy the delights of literary, or poetical, or serious conversation, for which Tasso had always much fondness, and in which Manso, who, though a nobleman and sportsman, was also an author

and poet of some consideration, was well qualified to bear a part.

Tasso was much pleased with the outpourings of these improvising friends. Indeed, it is a singular gift when possessed to perfection, as it is occasionally by these native bards and Pythonesses. It is often found in persons of no particular talent or acquirements. People who cannot perhaps write a decent verse, can yet improvise. The mellifluous Italian (though the gift is not exclusively confined to Italy) with its gushing flow, its easy rhymes, its somewhat loose versification is peculiarly adapted for a ready vehicle of poetry. Still the intricacies of the sonnet, the repetitions of the madrigal, or the strict laws of the stately canzone, are very trying even in Italian. And it is marvellous with what an instantaneous gush of language, and what variety of imagery the minstrels will pour forth an ode on any subject proposed to

them, and in any metre prescribed, observing all the unbending rules of composition without hesitation or delay. You see the cheek burn, the eye flush, the nostril dilate, the whole frame swell and heave with a Sibylline ecstasy. They look upon it themselves as a kind of inspiration, and I remember hearing it affirmed by a noble improvisatore, that many, if not most, of those distinguished for this gift advance at last from ecstasy to madness.

Tasso courteously proclaimed his envy of this gift of ready and instantaneous composition, in which he said Nature had been very sparing to himself. Indeed almost all, if not all great poets, have been remarkable for the extreme care and elaboration with which they have worked up their verse to such astonishing perfection, and for the exquisite finish of art by which they make their poetry so natural.

Besides these amusements, and these companions, Tasso had other still stranger asso-

ciates, and took part in conversation, of a yet abstruser and more mysterious nature. Here at least it was, in the old gloomy hall of the Castle of Bisaccio, with the split pine-logs blazing gloriously on the hearth, that after reviewing the events of the day's sport, and partaking in the Marquis's pleasant wine, and listening perhaps for a while to the merry song and music, as they wheeled themselves round to the fire to enjoy a more private conversation, Tasso would affirm that he had continual communings with a spirit. It was not, he was sure, an evil spirit, as it conversed with him frequently on religious subjects, and urged, and persuaded him to piety and devotion; and further, it often named the holiest names—every one knows that fiends could not do this, and that in the "Inferno of the Divina Comedia," the holiest name is never mentioned, in accordance with this opinion—and it reverenced the Cross, and the relics of saints, and what was still more, it gave him

consolation and comfort, and left him cheered and strengthened, when it departed, contrary to the practice of all evil spirits.

"I on the contrary affirmed," says Manso, "that, nevertheless, it could not be an angel, because, although he was a Christian, and a virtuous man, these favours of angelic appearances are not granted to persons of ordinary goodness, but to the perfect, and the saintly; so that it would be arrogance to believe that this spirit was an angel, as it would be unjust to conclude it a demon. Wherefore, since it was neither angel, nor demon, while there is no other kind of spirits, it followed, of necessity, that this was no real spirit, but rather a delusion of the imaginative faculty, really represented to him, as to many others, especially if of disordered vision, as he was." In fact, Manso endeavoured to convince his guest, that the appearance was, in Dr. Dendy's expression, "an intense idea."

Tasso defended the reality of his spiritual friend by observing, that he always re-appeared in the same form, such a form as he describes in the commencement of his dialogue "The Ambassador," a form which, if he was to have such a visitor, was by no means an unwelcome one for him to assume; and certainly more correct than the perpetual ballet, and pleasanter than the old woman in the red cloak, or the grinning scull, or the gentleman in brown, or the noisy crowd of Nicolai, or any other of the numerous spectral intruders, whose repeated appearance under the same aspect, rather invalidates this argument of Tasso, and exhausted the patience of those who had to witness them.

Tasso, moreover, maintained that if the sights, and voices, of which he was conscious, were mere fantastic imaginations, they would not transcend his own knowledge; since the imagination can only recall the same fan-

tasms, or the same realities, which the memory has stored away in its cells from actual observation. He, on the contrary, in the frequent, and long, and protracted discourses, which he had held with this spirit, had repeatedly learned from him things which he had never heard, or read, or known before: whence he concludes that these visions were not the mere creations of fancy, but true and real apparitions of a spirit, which, whatever was the reason, chose to show himself visibly. Manso seeming unconvinced, Tasso proceeded to promise him the so often quoted ocular demonstration:

"Since I cannot persuade you by my arguments," cried the poet, "I will undeceive you by actual experience, and will make you see with your very eyes that spirit, whose existence you will not credit on my word. I accepted the offer; and the following day, while we were sitting by ourselves near the fire, he turned his gaze toward one of the windows, and

kept it fixed there a considerable time, so that when I called him, he made me no answer. At last, 'Behold,' he said, 'the friendly spirit, which is courteously come to converse with me! Look at it! and you will see the truth of my words.' I turned my eyes, as he directed, but sharpen them as I could, I could still see nothing, but the rays of the sun, which entered into the chamber through the glasses of the window. (Observe they had window-panes then in Italy, even in the country houses.) And while I continued staring round, and seeing nothing, I perceived that Torquato had entered into the deepest arguments with his invisible ally. I saw no one, heard no one, but him. Nevertheless, his words, now in the way of proposition, now of reply, were such as we perceive pass between those who are engaged in the strict discussion of some important subject; and from his part in the dialogue, I could easily infer the answers which were made

him, although I could not hear them. And these reasonings were so sublime, and marvellous for the stupendous profundity of the subjects, and for a certain strange and unusual language, that quite beside myself for amazement, I durst not interrupt them, nor question Torquato of the spirit which he had pointed out to me, and which I did not see.

"Thus we remained, I listening for a considerable period half stupified, half charmed, as it were, without noticing the lapse of time. At last the spirit departed, as I understood from Torquato's words. Then he turned to me, and said, 'All doubts, I suppose, are removed to-day from your mind.' 'Rather,' I answered, 'they are all the more increased; for I have heard much that is very marvellous, and have seen nothing of what you promised to shew me, in order to clear up my doubts.' He replied with a smile, 'You have heard and seen much more of what perhaps—'

"And here he stopped. And as I durst not trouble him with new questions, we ended our discussion; from which I have never been able to conclude anything more than I affirmed at the beginning, namely, that these visions, whether disordered or purely imaginary ideas, would sooner drive me out of my senses, than come out of his."

"We must conclude," says the sage Muratori, "that in Tasso's fancy was deeply engraved the story of the genius or spirit of Socrates. In his great and violent fits of abstraction, Tasso, himself also a great philosopher, imagined perhaps that he was speaking with another person, while in reality he was talking with, and answering himself."

Perhaps also the early dinner was over, the wine and chestnuts finished, and the dreamy siesta stealing over the two gentlemen. Perhaps Tasso was shewing the Marquis how he in his turn could improvise. Per-

haps—and here we may stop with Tasso himself.

After about six weeks' enjoyment of this repose and these amusements, he returned to Naples, in company with Manso. There he again occupied his apartments in the Monastery of Mount Olivet, and resumed the labour in which he was unfortunately wasting his time and talents,—the alteration, namely, of his "Jerusalem." Manso remonstrated with him judiciously enough, but the poet seems to have regarded this labour as a kind of religious duty, and yet, after all, those portions of his poem which are objectionable for somewhat of licentiousness were not omitted in the amended work.

His troublesome friend, however, the Count of Paleno, soon began once more to disturb his tranquillity with renewed importunities, and was doubly pressing, apparently in wilful opposition to his father. Tasso, partly to

escape this annoyance, partly also to rescue his papers and books, which were still detained at Mantua, resolved on another visit to Rome. He committed his law-suit, which had made no progress yet, to the care of his advocate, Fabrizio Feltro. He wrote to the Duke of Mantua, imploring him, since he had been pleased to release his person, to release his books also, assuring him that he need not keep them for hostages of his good behaviour, as his affection was a sufficient pledge; and adding that, as he was reduced to despair of his health, he trusted the Duke would favour him in his studies, which were the only consolation of his misery.

Once more then behold him on the road toward Rome, supplied with the funds necessary for his journey by the kindness of a gentleman of Bergamo, his kinsman. If he had any hopes and expectations of advancing himself, any day-dreams of ambition left, they

were far colder and paler than on his previous visit. His disappointment, therefore, though as complete, was probably not by any means as grievous. His portmanteau was detained at the dogana, as he had not four crowns, which the officers demanded for its admission. He was compelled to proceed without it, and in that state of poverty alighted at the palace of the Cardinal Scipio Gonzaga.

There he was ill received, so that he was forced to write hastily to father Nicolo degli Oddi, the Paduan abbot of Mount Olivet, then at Rome, announcing his arrival, and requesting his presence. The kind abbot, conjecturing the circumstances of his friend, hastened with a carriage to his assistance, and satisfying the demands of the custom-house, and so extricating his baggage, conveyed him at once to the Olivetan monastery of Santa Maria Nuova at Rome. Here, though more oppressed with fancies than ever, he set

himself, with his usual indefatigable industry, to collect all his works, that he might publish them altogether in a large handsome edition at his own expence, and with the patents of all the Italian princes, that so the copyright might be secured, and he have a chance of at last sharing the produce of his assiduous labours, of which he had been so cruelly defrauded by the various publishers.

He wrote repeatedly to different correspondents, especially to Costantini at Venice, to obtain prohibitions against the numerous printers. All his endeavours, however, were vain. He never had the pleasure or advantage of bringing out the works himself, either in a worthy or profitable form. He might with justice appeal to posterity against the treatment which he met with from his contemporaries. Still, notwithstanding these disappointments, and a return of his fever, which troubled him, more or less, for three

months, he produced a collection of his minor poems in three volumes. He composed a grand "Oration" in honour of the House of Medici; and though he groaned over his melancholy humours, and the exhaustion of his poetical vein, two beautiful canzoni, one in honour of Duke Ferdinand's nuptials, and the other of Virginio Orsini, Duke of Bracciano and Duke Ferdinand's nephew, attested that it was not extinct; and at the same time, though he lamented the loss of his memory, he retained sufficient to finish a dialogue, one of his finest, on the subject of Mercy.

So straitened, however, were his circumstances, that he was obliged to request help; and that of one who had not shown him much kindness, in order to have these works copied. "I am forced," he writes, "to pray for assistance from you, when I should be making war against you. I implore the succour of Monsignore Papio, to recopy my

Dialogue on Mercy, an excellent dialogue; not to say of the highest talent. The same circumstances, which force me to beg, force me also thus to praise my own work, since I find no one else who will give it the praises which it merits; whether from ill-will, or from ignorance, or from both causes combined."

Tasso's sufferings, during this year, are very apparent. His movements, and their causes, are not so manifest. We find him, in about four months' time, returned to the palace of Cardinal Gonzaga. Costantini, his great friend, enters the service of the Duke of Mantua. Tasso begins to hope. His patron, Gonzaga, leaves Rome. Tasso remains, and by the jealousy and enmity of the cardinal's menials, is forthwith turned out of the palace. "In these great heats, feverish and exhausted with many months' ill-health, I have found the greatest difficulty in obtaining a lodging. Now I have found one, they will

not let me stay, so that I shall be obliged to return to Naples this September, if they have patience enough to let me stay over August and recover a little from my sickness."

In spite of his misery, he writes a splendid canzone, to celebrate the birth of the Duke of Mantua's third son, which he sends to Costantini, that he might present it to the Duke. He pours out his distresses in a letter to that friend. "He has been obliged to make away with his summer vesture, his fur coats, his dressing gowns, even his shirts. He fears that he shall have to die in a hospital."

The Duke sends a supply of money and clothes, but unfortunately through Alario, Tasso's enemy, so that it never reaches the poor poet. Fifteen crowns arriving from Naples give him a momentary relief. Then the Abbot degli Oddi, as it were, forces him into

the monastery of Santa Maria Nuova once more, where he remains a short season, begging in vain of Papio sufficient assistance to enable him to have copies of his works taken, in order not to put his hosts to expence. Whether he quitted the monastery unwilling to be further troublesome to the monks, or because he found them weary of his melancholy presence, certain it is, from one of Tasso's own letters, that having left their abode, he was reduced before long to hide his misery and poverty in a public hospital.

The hospital of the Bergamaschi, his immediate relatives had been its founders, received him out of charity, in this distressed condition. To escape the necessity of begging in public, he was glad to bury himself among the destitute sick, whom the charity of his own family supported. There was he found at last by his cousin Alexander.

Tasso, great glory of the Historic Muse,
Whose mighty like no following century shows,
What wealth, what honours crown'd? Oh, Italy!
He had not whence, or coat, or loaf, to buy.
In common wards midst pauper sick he lay;
Or stood with vagrants by the public way,
In rags and tatters, penniless, and poor;
And all but begg'd at every church's door.*

* Tassus Mæoniæ decus immortale Camenæ, &c.

SATIRE BY NICCOLA VILLANI.

CHAPTER VII.

RETURN TO NAPLES—PROPOSED TRIUMPH.

We have now watched Tasso's fortunes to their lowest ebb. From this point they rose, in some measure, during the short remainder of his life, though with a very intermitting flow, and never to any great height of prosperity. "The lash" of affliction had, by this time, smitten him severely in the tenderest point so very frequently and effectually, that his spirit was thoroughly humbled. We cannot any longer perceive any remains of that

pride which had occasioned him so many troubles; neither does he appear any more to have indulged himself in those wild romantic day-dreams, which often, by their contrast with the truth, produce bitter and needless disappointment, make the sober realities of life painful and intolerable; and engender a morbid and selfish melancholy, which embitters the mind towards all the world around.

The work of adversity was advancing toward completion in Tasso; its purpose accomplishing in the purification of his character. The rough hands of insult and want were stripping off the love of glory, "the soul's last earthly garment" from his spirit, though they bruised and wounded it sorely in so doing. His melancholy indeed remained, but there was not the least tinge of selfishness or bitterness in it; and when his pride was broken,

it gradually lost its restlessness and painfulness.

From the hospital, he was removed to his former quarters in the monastery of Santa Maria Nuova. Hopes were given him that a monthly pension of thirty scudi would be assigned him by the city of Naples; and although this proposal came to nothing, yet he received divers remittances from the nobility of that kingdom, and many pressing invitations to return to their society. He was also informed that the Duke of Mantua was re-admitting him to his favour, and anxious for his return to his court.

Tasso, however, had a nervous apprehension of venturing again so near Ferrara, and a well-grounded distaste for courts. He excused himself "because he was still troubled with fever, weakened with protracted ill-health, terrified by fortune, and the perfidy of mankind, shaken

with apprehensions of every possible danger, and, above all, oppressed with melancholy, unable to find anything which could console him, or keep anything which could cheer him, or imagine anything which could dissuade him from despair;" he means upon earth, for his only stay seemed exercises of devotion, in which he found support, though scarcely yet peace. And he beseeches his correspondent Fabio, the Duke's majordomo, to ask his master's pardon for his irresolution, and delay.

Meanwhile, he received a kind message, and present of a hundred-and-fifty crowns from the Grand Duke of Tuscany, in answer to the Oration, and Epithalamium, which he had sent to that Prince. He was also invited to Florence, with many kind expressions, and promises. This caused him to receive more pressing calls from Mantua. The two courts seemed contending for him with mutual rivalry. Sickness,

however, prevented his removing from Rome to either of these places.

He again visited Cardinal Gonzaga's house, and again experienced the same unkindness, and neglect. It seems as if he could not believe in the unfaithfulness of so great a friend. He was not admitted to Gonzaga's table, notwithstanding the intimate terms on which they had formerly lived. He was unnoticed, never spoken to, but left to shift among the menials, as he might.

At the same time, so mingled was the web of his life, fresh and more urgent invitations arrived from Mantua, and from Florence. The Grand Duke, moreover, the only sovereign who was liberal of anything beyond words, sent him another hundred crowns, and offered further provision for his journey, if he would come to his court. The sum was a large relief to one who wanted a shilling to buy a pair of gloves.

And thus "this Prince, the greatest economist in Europe, bought me," says Tasso, "with a hundred-and-fifty crowns."

Having thus, to his great encouragement, acquired, or recovered, the favour of these two Princes, he needed only, he tells us, for his perfect consolation, the favour of his ancient master, the Duke of Ferrara. This, however, he never obtained. Alfonso never shewed one symptom of relenting. Tasso then published, at Rome, an oration on the valour of the Romans, criticising the comparisons of Plutarch, much admired for its eloquence, erudition, and patriotism. He dedicated it to Fabio Orsino, a distinguished prelate, for whom, two years before, he had composed the "Rogo di Corinna," a dramatic dirge on the death of a young person, to whom Fabio had been attached, and whose unhappy end was the cause of his taking orders.

Finding himself then, in April A.D. 1590,

in better health than usual, he started for Florence. On his way, he spent Passion-week in the Olivetan monastery at Siena, where he composed a fine and solemn canzone for Good-Friday. The manuscript has been preserved by the monks, as one of the greatest treasures of their house. He then proceeded leisurely to Florence, still lodging in the Olivetan monastery at that city also.

The Grand Duke, and his spouse, and all the Medici family, and all the academies, except that of della Crusca, and all the literary world in Florence, and indeed the whole city, crowded, as usual, to welcome, or gaze on, the celebrated poet, and celebrated sufferer. Wherever he went, this was the customary reception which he met with.

"In every city, there was no man of any account who did not visit him, or invite him, or pay him some sort of honour. Friends invited friends wherever there was the least

chance of encountering him. All pointed him out in the streets to their companions; all spoke of having seen him to their parents, or their brethren, or their children, when they re-entered their houses after meeting him."*

What a strange contrast was his life throughout. The mixture of esteem and insult, of admiration and neglect, of flattery and oppression, of ladies' bowers and lunatic asylums, royal palaces and pauper hospitals, the perpetual interchange of abundance and starvation, luxury and nakedness, the rapidity of the vicissitudes, the extremes of exaltation and depression, the continual glitter of rising hopes, their as continual disappearance in the gloom of unvarying disappointment, the sombre hues of melancholy, and the softer colours of devotion, and kindliness, spread over all these events of his life, make his history a living kaleidoscope of the most changeful, and singular, but dazzling, and at-

* Orazione di St. Annunciato.

tractive description. One feature, however, in his character strikes us immediately on his liberation from the cells of Santa Anna, that is, as we have observed, his restlessness. He moves incessantly from one city to another. He tries service after service, but engages himself to none. He attributed these continual movements to the necessity of seeking the restoration of his health; and, indeed, his frequent, and almost incessant, disorders, contributed much, without doubt, to his disquietude. Nevertheless, it was at least as much mental as bodily. In the midst of it, however, and especially after his humiliation in Rome, he seems to have been schooling himself to look more earnestly, and faithfully toward eternity, for that peace which was denied him upon earth.

The Marquis of Ventimiglia, the first baron of Sicily, requested him to enrol his ancestors on the columns of the Temple of Fame by commemorating them in his new poem, asking, through Niccolo degli Oddi, what present

would be most acceptable to the poet. Tasso answered, a silver cup and a little round basin, which his servant might always carry on a tripod, and he be thus ever ready to go with his God.

"I will wait," he writes, "for the capture of the earthly Jerusalem, that I may then triumph in the heavenly. I only recover from one sickness by falling into another. I fear that I must conclude with Hippocrates that man is all a disease. Those disorders especially have been most annoying which have not let me rest in Mantua, in Rome, in Florence, in Naples."

And indeed he was perpetually on the road between these cities. He went from Naples to Rome, Rome to Florence. At Florence he moved from the Olivetan Monastery to a villa in the vicinity, and then back to the monastery. Then came tidings of Sixtus V.'s death; after whom three Popes in rapid succession rose, and vanished like phantoms in the Vatican.

The first was John Batista Castagna,

Urban VII. He died on the twelfth day of his pontificate. The next was Gregory XIV., whom Tasso had celebrated in a fine canzone, and whom he esteemed a friend, and with whom he was intimate.

Forthwith he rose from his sick bed, and hastened to Rome. He encountered the usual disappointments, and thought of retiring into a monastery. Costantini, his old friend, persuaded him instead to accompany him to Mantua, his principal object apparently being to publish a good reprint of his works. After a month spent upon the journey, so slowly was he obliged to travel, he reached Mantua, and was kindly received by the royal family. He had purposed to have his works printed at Venice, but Costantini could not manage the agreement as he desired. He succeeded only in having one part of his lesser poems published. The other Licino was to have printed at Bergamo, but neglected his engagement; and while the poet was expecting the whole book, he received only a few proof

sheets, much to his annoyance. He wrote fresh canzoni in honour of his patrons, and a poetical genealogy of their family. How sad that he should have to waste, we might almost say desecrate, such talents and industry in compliments and flatteries!

But Costantini departed, and left him solitary in Mantua. The marshy neighbourhood disagreed with him. Gregory XIV. died, and was succeeded by John Antony Facchinetto Innocent IX. Tasso believing that he might befriend him, hastened to avail himself of the Duke of Mantua's visiting Rome, to resort once more to that city. His old master and friend Cataneo, whose protector, Cardinal Albano, had died in the interval, arrived now at independence and ecclesiastical dignity, received him very kindly. Then, after two months' pontificate, Innocent died; and Santorio, Cardinal of Santa Severina, was hourly expected to succeed him. Tasso's hopes increased. But

Santorio's chances of election diminished, and with them Tasso's hopes of ecclesiastical preferment. Cardinal Aldobrandini, by a strange union of parties, obtained the tiara, and assumed the name of Clement VIII.

Tasso, meanwhile, had withdrawn to Naples, at the pressing instances of the Count of Paleno, his young eager friend, now delivered by his father's demise from parental control, and become himself Prince of Conca. This headstrong ally received him with the greatest joy, and provided for him the best apartments in his palace, the most splendid furniture, the richest entertainment, and watched with the most intense and ardent interest the composition of a canzone to Clement, and the progress of the new epic, the "Jerusalem Conquered," in which his guest still unhappily continued to employ himself. So overwhelming, in fact, were his attachment and his attentions, that Tasso found himself once more almost a prisoner, as the young Prince

had given his servants directions on no account to suffer Tasso to quit his palace with his book.

The faithful Argus kept watch over the volume, in which the poem was contained, with such uninterrupted and pertinacious assiduity, that Tasso at last perceived it. After wondering for awhile, he could endure the annoyance no longer; but after some deliberation, imparted his trouble to his firm friend, the Marquis Manso. The Marquis accordingly one day marched up into his room, and taking Tasso with one hand, the volume in the other, walked them both out of the Prince of Conca's palace, and transferred them to a house of his own on the water's side, apparently where the royal gardens now spread the green network of their foliage against the sapphire surface of the bay. The Prince bore his guest's escape patiently, and reconciled himself at once both to Tasso and his deliverer, at the hospitable dinner-table

of the latter, crying out, with his usual warmth, and with more than his usual judgment, that he intended to consider Tasso still his guest, and see as much of him in the Marquis's house as he could in his own.

Here Tasso had another breathing-space. "For Manso," says that nobleman himself, "dwelt on the most delightful shore of that delightful sea, in a beautiful house somewhat elevated above the rest, surrounded by lovely gardens, which, clad by the tender spring with fresh foliage and budding blossoms, with their verdure and balmy odours, and still more, the purity of the atmosphere, so recovered Tasso from his inveterate melancholy, that in a house which he regarded not so much as that of a particular friend, as altogether his own, he began to improve considerably in health, and to think himself almost cured."

In this pleasant sojourn, with such skies, and waters, and flowers, and odours, and friendship, to

assist his muse, Tasso made great progress with his "Jerusalem Conquered," though far from completing it at this time, as Manso gives us to understand. Here also, conversing frequently with Vittoria Loffredo, the Marquis's mother, a lady of great age, knowledge, and worth, and extremely devout, at her request that he would write a directly sacred poem, he commenced a poem on the Scriptural history of creation, entitled "The Seven Days," or the "Universe Created." This is sometimes spoken of as an epic poem, but is more properly a grave didactic poem, containing all the knowledge and theology of the period without any particular plot or plan. It is in blank verse, and somewhat stiff and dry, though here and there, especially toward its conclusion, interspersed with fine and almost sublime passages, both descriptive and moral.

It was never, however, retouched and finished as the author intended. This, many critics have thought to have been partly taken from

a Latin poem on the same subject by Dubartas. And to it many have said that Milton was much indebted in his description of the Creation in his "Paradise Lost;" as they have also charged him with borrowing the ideas and images of the battle of the Angels, the "Allegro" and "Penseroso," we might add, of his "Hymn on the Nativity." It is most probable that he, an universal scholar, an Italian traveller, a friend of Manso, whom he has immortalized in the beautiful Latin poem entitled by his name, was well acquainted with all Tasso's poetry, and very likely with the other authors whom he is accused of copying. But if it be true that he stole, his touch is certainly that of Midas, and he has the weakness to give us, at the least, like Glaucus in the Iliad.

Χρύσεα χαλκείων, ἑκατόμβοι ἐννεαβοιῶν.*

In Tasso's "Mondo Creato," if rugged and

* Golden for brazen, a hundred for nine oxen's worth.

prosaic in many parts, there is a very deep religious tone, as far as can be concluded from its perusal, of the most serious and earnest character, and this perhaps is the one chief attraction of the poem, the last "Day" of which, however, contains some fine poetry. At the same time, he also undertook a Dialogue entitled "of Friendship," in which he shewed his gratitude to Manso by making him chief interlocutor. It is a remarkable distinction of that amiable nobleman, to have earned and preserved the friendship and true affection of two such bards as Tasso and Milton.

The advocates had at length succeeded in discovering the occupant of Tasso's maternal inheritance. It was the Prince of Avellino, as heir of Scipio de' Rossi, his mother's last surviving brother. The suit could therefore be commenced, and under not unfavourable auspices. Tasso, indeed, was objected to as plaintiff, on the ground of his madness, as

Sophocles in ancient times, on the ground of his decrepitude, and the same reply was ready, the production of his poem; and the question, "Num illud carmen desipientis videtur?" "Is this a dotard's poetry?"

All things thus seemed to invite Tasso's stay. But he could not rest. He received, Serassi thinks procured, a command from the Pope, through his nephew, Cardinal Cintio Aldobrandini, requiring his presence in Rome. And for that city he once more started toward the end of April, commending the conduct of his cause to his advocate's hands. It was during this journey that the famous brigand, Marco Sciarra, shewed such courtesy, or such honour for poesy.

> Lift not thy spear against the Muse's bower!
> The great Emathian conqueror bad spare
> The house of Pindarus, when temple and tower
> Went to the ground.

Some friends had accompanied Tasso from

Capua, as far as Mola di Gaeta. After the death of Sixtus, the severe not to say cruel, extirpator of all robbers and plunderers, during the rapid succession of momentary Popes, and the protracted debates in their election, the brigands had recommenced operations on an unusual scale, and from their noted haunt, the mountains of the Abruzzi, were scouring the whole country on the confines of the Papal and Neapolitan territories, and, indeed, almost all the middle region of Italy. Alfonso Piccolomini, till overthrown by the Grand-duke of Tuscany, and impaled in Florence, made a threat of attacking Rome, and if he had been joined by Sciarra, would, some historians think, have assaulted and stormed it. Sciarra himself had recently led his band, we might almost say forces, down into Apulia; had laid siege to the Episcopal town of Lucera, and taken and plundered it, putting the bishop and most of the inhabitants to death.

For fear of these plunderers, Manso tells us, the postman of Naples, with his escort, remained shut up for some time in Mola and Castiglione, villages of Gaeta, and with them, Torquato.

"We are delayed," writes the poet himself to Orazio Feltro, his advocate, "here in Mola, by the fear of Marco di Sciarra, who is in this neighbourhood, with a numerous troop of bandits, as they tell us. Yesterday they killed a great many persons, and carried off others prisoners. Indeed care must be taken lest this grow into another servile war like that of Spartacus. I was grieved before at having to refuse any part of Signor Manso's bounty, and now I must grieve at being forced into new expenses." And in another letter: "Things begin to look quite like war, for Marco Sciarra will not dislodge, and every day skirmishes with our men, and occasions us much loss. The other evening the whole country resounded

with the wailings and shrieks of women, when the first assault was made on Castiglione. I was anxious to march out, and flesh the sword which you gave me, but was prevented. The warfare may be protracted indefinitely, and I have to stay here very uncomfortably lodged, and not at my own disposal, but at that of the police, who have not indeed shut me up, but will not permit me to advance before the country is safe."

Every one then knows that Sciarra, hearing of Tasso's detention in Gaeta, sent to him, not only offering a free passage, and escort, and lodging for his journey, but also promising obedience to all his commands, placing himself and all his men at his good pleasure. Tasso returned thanks, but would not accept the invitation, partly perhaps because he judged it unbecoming to be so obliged, partly because they would not at first extend the agreement to the commissaries, or escort with him.

When Sciarra was informed of Tasso's refusal and its reasons, he sent a second message, that out of regard for him, he would withdraw altogether for a time. And so he did. "Such power, even over wild minds, has the renown of virtue and worth."

The passage being thus open, Tasso recommenced his journey without delay—none of the party, we may be sure, made any unnecessary lingering—and arrived at Rome in haste. There, through the mediation of Statilio Paolini, Bishop of Osimo, he was received into the house of the Aldobrandini, the Pope's nephews, on conditions most agreeable to his disposition, that he should be exempt from all attendance and service, and have full leisure for philosophy and poetry.

Of these two nephews, one, Pietro, was the son of the Pope's brother, the other, Cintio, was his sister's son. The last, in the beginning of Clement's reign, had the greatest authority

and influence. His cousin, in later times, supplanted him, and, in fact, nearly monopolized the government of Rome. But when Tasso arrived, Clement himself was yet full of activity, working and toiling from morning to night, with all the energy of those who have surmounted difficulties and impediments, and raised themselves to station and power by their own exertions and industry. His two nephews were hitherto rather deputed to perform the offices of hospitality and liberality than admitted to any particular influence in state affairs. Both became Cardinals.

It was to the service of Cintio that Tasso attached himself, and to him that he dedicated his second "Jerusalem," which he had previously proposed to dedicate to Ferdinand of Tuscany. Ingegneri, who had first published the first "Jerusalem," was now employed to bring out the second, which Tasso, with the

feelings not unusual in poets, regarded as completely eclipsing the glory of his earlier composition, as Milton is said to have preferred his "Paradise Regained." Neither his contemporaries, however, nor posterity have agreed with his judgment. The one is read by all, the other scarcely ever glanced over, except by critics or historians.

"I am most affectionately disposed," he says, in a letter to Panigarola, "toward my new poem, or rather newly re-formed poem, as to a child of my understanding." He alludes to Aristotle's saying that poets love their works as if they were their children. "I am estranged from the first, as parents from rebellious children, or children whom they imagine to be born of adultery." Manso affirms, that Tasso afterwards projected a third reformation of his poem, differing partly from both, which he states of his own knowledge; and the words

quoted above hardly bear out Serassi's contradiction of this statement, which he grounds upon them.

He published this work on Cintio's elevation to the Cardinalate. It had been ready for some time, but was delayed in order to pay higher compliments to his Mecenas when thus elevated in dignity. He repeats, in his preface to it, his opinion of its superiority.

"I will not compare," he says, "myself with Ariosto, or my 'Jerusalem' with his 'Furioso,' as both my enemies and my friends have done, but myself, now in years, and nigh to death, (he was but fifty-one), to myself in youth, and yet, as I may say, immature, and I will institute a comparison between my former earthly 'Jerusalem,' and this, which if I mistake not, is far more like the idea of the heavenly 'Jérusalem.' And in this comparison I may be permitted, without arrogance, to prefer my ripe poems to my unripe, and

the labours of my age to the sports of an earlier period, and I may affirm of my 'Jerusalem,' without blushing, what Dante said of Beatrice in glory and bliss,

'She seemed her former self to overpass.'"

His purpose apparently was, as has been said, to purify and cleanse his original poem. But he only succeeded in deadening and chilling it, for he did not omit those portions which seem objectionable. He seems to forget that labour will not compensate for the fervour of inspiration when departed. One thing, however, in the new poem is very observable. Besides striking out the dedication to the Duke of Ferrara, which prefaces the original "Jerusalem," he suppressed almost all the passages which tend to the honour of that prince and the House of d'Este. The character of Rinaldo, in which they are celebrated as the foremost of heroes, the episode of Sofronia and Olindo,

in which it was thought that Leonora and himself were represented, are wanting. Cesare d'Este is the only member of his ancient patron's family commemorated with distinction in the second work.

Scipio Gonzaga died in the beginning of the year, and Tasso had proposed to celebrate his memory, both in prose and verse; but for some reason or other, perhaps press of other occupations, he never fulfilled his intentions, as Gonzaga had certainly never fulfilled his hopes.

He composed also about this time two sacred poems in *ottava rima* of a fine melancholy tone, the "Tears of Mary," and the "Tears of Jesus." The former idea originated in the sight of a fine picture by Albert Durer of the Virgin, as the "Mater Dolorosa," which Cintio kept in his own chamber. The second was suggested by the first, but far surpasses it in pathos and solemnity. And now also

appeared the second volume of his minor poems, which should have come out contemporaneously with the first, and which even now, by misprints and omissions, disappointed his expectations. He had it presented, however, to his ancient friend and patroness, the Duchess of Mantua, to whom it was dedicated, and who sent him in return a rich jewel to Rome. His abode in that city was generally the Vatican, though he sometimes accompanied the Court to the other palace on Monte Cavallo. Still the former was his favourite residence.

I know not if any dwelling in hall, bower, or palace, in the stateliest and most famous cities, is so adapted to poetical imaginings as the woods and the hills, "where inspiration breathes around." If any such is to be found, it certainly would be an apartment in the Vatican. The huge dome of St. Peter's towering over-head, the colonnades and fountains before it, the quiet gardens attached to

the palace, the neighbouring walks along the Janiculum, the innumerable and inestimable stores of ancient and modern literature and art; the labyrinthine halls and galleries which contain them, with all their glorious decorations; the memories of the past, "where at every footstep we walk upon a history,"* may almost compensate for the inspiration of nature, and were certainly, those at least of them which were then in existence, well fitted to soothe and lull even Tasso's agitated mind, into a suitable tone for the completion of his sacred poem, to which, being freed from other literary labours, he entirely devoted himself, as far as his health would permit.

Here he dwelt, favoured by the Pope himself, honoured and beloved by his two nephews, especially the Cardinal Cintio, who admitted him freely and fully to all the honours of their society and table. All the "sacred

* "Quocunque ingredimur in aliquam historiam vestigium sistimus," says Cicero of Athens.

college" vied in showing him attention. The nobles and princes of Rome, the Gaetani, Orsini, Colonnas, the haughtiest barons in existence, were equally anxious to entertain him. The prelates immediately attached to the Court befriended him in every way. The scholars and authors among them, sought eagerly the privilege of his society and conversation.

Occasionally he visited the schools of theology and philosophy, especially that in which his former enemy at Padua, Patrizio, was lecturing, as of old, on the theories of Plato. Sometimes he would take a quiet stroll with some other bard, or literary friend, especially with Antonio Decio da Orte, author of the "Acripanda," a stiff and stilted tragedy, admired, noted, pointed at, by all men as he passed, in the same way as he had been regarded at Florence.

His feeble health, however, was gradually declining, and in the summer months, when all indeed who can, quit Rome, he retired

once more to Naples, with the consent of the Aldobrandini. During this visit, he lodged with the monks of Monte Cassino, in their monastery of St. Severino, where he had the pleasure of again embracing Manso, to whom he had sent his "Dialogue on Friendship," as a well-deserved testimony of thankfulness for his unvarying affection. Manso's return seems strange, but was as kind an offering as he could make. It was a handsome wardrobe of fine shirts and other linen, made up most of it by his own mother and wife, which to one so particular, though quiet in his dress, as Tasso was, must have been highly acceptable in his narrow circumstances.

His suit was still dragging tediously on. His presence, indeed, quickened the movements of his lawyers. But though his claim seemed unquestionable, the interest of the defendant was sufficient to stave off any unfavourable sentence. Even the letters of

recommendation, which he had obtained from divers princes, the Grand-Duke of Tuscany, the Dukes of Mantua and Urbino, and even the King of Spain, were ineffectual. The last, indeed, most probably miscarried. Tasso had consigned it to the abbot of the Olivetan monastery, where he had formerly lodged; and when it was demanded, it was not forthcoming.

He wrote while on this visit, for his pen could never rest, any more than himself, the "Dialogues on Devices," (Imprese), and a Latin "Address to the Youth of Naples." His Latin poetry is not reckoned equal, or proportionate rather, to the excellence of his Italian, being somewhat stiff and inharmonious, though showing traces of a master mind. Although confining himself chiefly to the monastery, he frequently paid short visits to his friend Manso, to the Prince of Conca, and the Prince of Venosa, for whom he composed some madrigals,

for five voices, to adorn a book of songs which that nobleman, a celebrated singer, was bringing out. Remarkably enough, this Prince was about to proceed to Ferrara, to espouse the sister of Cesare d' Este.

He wrote to Alfonso, at Tasso's suggestion, requesting leave to bring him in his company, as he was sincerely desirous of kissing his hands, and obtaining an assurance of his forgiveness before he died. But that implacable sovereign absolutely refused to admit him into his presence, or show the least token of reconciliation toward him. He never relented, although Tasso seemed most anxious, oppressed as he had been, to obtain some proofs of grace and pardon before his death, which he now apprehended to be at no great distance. His last letter to Alfonso is noble and striking.

"If past events might be recalled, there is nothing which would so rejoice me as to have

been always engaged in your Highness's service. But since it is impossible to amend the past, in that space of life yet left me, which is but a momentary interval, I will guard myself more carefully from offending your Highness than any other person. This has been my resolution for many years, though often interfered with, and but ill carried into effect. Once more I implore your Highness to have compassion upon me, and I pray God most devoutly to grant me His pardon, and that of your Highness."

Alfonso's was not to be won by any entreaties. Surely the offence must have been deep.

Tasso all this time was making progress in his "Mondo Creato," and reciting portions of it to his friends, according to his usual custom, as he composed, or altered, or corrected them. The Polish ambassador, Stanislaus Resch, was added to the number of his auditors and admirers. He was sometimes engaged

in literary discussions, as, for instance, on the respective merits of Tansillo and Casa, poets of the time, whom he highly commended, the former for eloquence, the latter for sublimity; more often in edifying conversations with Manso's mother, or other religious persons. A portion of his time he devoted to superintending the publication of his dialogues on "Heroic Poetry" and "Devices." At other times, he was watching the progress of his law-suit, and weighing the chances of recovering his inheritance, and the wisdom of coming to some composition with the defendant.

In these occupations some months glided speedily away, and he seemed altogether to have forgotten Rome, and the Cardinal Cintio, his patron, and the Vatican, and the Pope, and his hopes of preferment.

The Cardinal, however, was by no means willing to lose the honour of so distinguished an attendant, or the pleasure of such an accom-

plished scholar's society, or the delight of watching the completion of his poem. To recal him to Rome, and as it were oblige him to return, he conceived the idea of petitioning the Pope, his uncle, and the Roman Senate (stat magni nominis umbra!) to grant Tasso a triumph, how strangely different from the ancient triumphs—and the laurel crown in the Capitol, the highest reward of poetic merit, and of which Tasso in previous days had expressed some desire. The petition was readily granted, and the intended honour was made known to Tasso.

There had been some very early precedents; but every one knows of Petrarch's coronation. Harps of deeper tone and wider renown than his own have made its fame common. It would be vain to describe it in other words than those of Gibbon. With his usual condensation and antithesis, and his scornful, sparkling sarcasm, here perhaps by no means misapplied as in

most other cases, the historian has condescended to give a lively account of this important transaction.

"From his earliest youth, Petrarch aspired to the poetic crown. The academical honours of the three faculties had introduced a royal degree of master or doctor in the art of poetry, and the title of poet laureate, which custom rather than vanity perpetuates in the English court, was first invented by the Csars of Germany. In the musical games of antiquity a prize was bestowed on the victor. The belief that Horace and Virgil had been crowned in the Capitol inflamed the emulation of the Latin bard.

"In the thirty-sixth year of his age, he was solicited to accept the object of his wishes. And on the same day, in the solitude of Vaucluse, he received a similar and solemn invitation from the Senate of Rome and University of Paris. After some moments of complacency

and suspense, he preferred the summons of the metropolis of the world.

"The ceremony of his coronation was performed in the Capitol by his friend and patron, the supreme magistrate of the Republic. Twelve patrician youths were arrayed in scarlet. Six representatives of the most illustrious families, in green robes, with garlands of flowers, accompanied the procession. In the midst of the princes and nobles, the Senator, Count of Anguillara, a kinsman of the Colonnas, assumed his throne; and at the voice of a herald, Petrarch arose. After discoursing on a text of Virgil and thrice repeating his vows for the prosperity of Rome, he knelt before the throne, and received from the Senate a laurel crown, with a more precious declaration—'This is the reward of merit.'

"The people shouted long life to the Capitol, and the poet. A sonnet, in praise of Rome, was accepted, as the effusion of genius, and

gratitude; and after the whole procession had visited the Vatican, the profane wreath was suspended before the shrine of St. Peter. In the act, or diploma, which was presented to Petrarch, the title and prerogative of poet laureat are revived in the Capitol after a lapse of 1300 years; and he receives the perpetual privilege of wearing, at his choice, a crown of laurel, ivy, or myrtle, of assuming the poetic habit, of teaching, disputing, interpreting, and composing, in all places whatsoever, and on all subjects of literature."

Such was the great precedent of the honour now offered Tasso, not very attractive perhaps in itself, to a melancholy, sickly, and devout man of fifty-one, especially as Petrarch had declared that, from the hour of his coronation, he had never known rest or peace, from the envy which it engendered. Since then, too, the laurel had rested on inferior heads.

But there was also another much fresher

precedent, which by no means rendered the distinction more attractive. This was the coronation of Baraballo,* by the order of that merry pontiff, Leo X., when that vain poetaster, notwithstanding his gray hairs, and noble birth, and the remonstrances of his relations, indulged the absurd humour of the Pope, and his court, by arraying himself in the palm-embroidered robe, and laticlave, of the ancient Romans; and after reciting, with great dignity, several of his poems in the great place, in front of the Vatican, mounted the elephant, which the King of Portugal had just presented to Leo, and rode in great state, as if proceeding to the Capitol, till the wiser beast, which carried him, stopped on the bridge of St. Angelo, and cut short, by his restive humour, the triumphant procession, and the mockeries of the populace.

The messages, however, and invitations of

* *See* "Roscoe Life of Leo X.," vol. II., p. 181.

Cardinal Cintio were so pressing, that Tasso knew not how to refuse them altogether. His friends were urgent with him to accept the offer. Even Manso, with whom he retired to his small but beautiful castle of Pianca, pressed him not to rejcct it. He felt also himself much gratitude toward Cintio, whose service he had preferred to that of Pietro Aldobrandini; and aware that the Cardinal's health was delicate, he was anxious, if possible, to fulfil his wishes. He therefore at last gave a reluctant assent to the importunities of his friends, and wrote to inform Cintio that he would be presently at Rome. He committed again the settlement of his claims on the Prince of Avellino, to his advocate, Feltro, who, having failed in bringing the suit to a regular issue, was endeavouring to prevail on the Prince to make a fair composition with Tasso, allowing him an annuity for life, on the surrender of

all further demands. This point, indeed, seemed decided. The only question left was the amount of the annuity, which occasioned further haggling and disputing. Tasso could not wait for the final settlement of this business, but resolved, though very unwillingly, to start at once for Rome.

He was conscious of his approaching dissolution, and declared to Manso before he departed, that although he went by his advice, he yet felt sure that he should not be in time to receive that honour, his coronation namely, which he persuaded him to seek. Then having embraced his friend with much tenderness, as if never expecting to see him any more, he started about the first of November, and having rested in the celebrated Monastery of Monte Cassino, and there visited with much devotion the body of Saint Benedict, its founder, preserved in this the original monastery of Western

Christendom, and passed some days in seclusion and meditation, he proceeded upon his journey.

At some little distance from the gates of Rome, he was met by the household of the two Cardinal nephews, and by a great part of the Pope's own suite, and by many prelates, and ministers, and noblemen, and conducted by them in great state, as if in prelude to his intended triumph, to the Vatican Palace, where he was immediately admitted to salute Cintio and Pietro, to whom he presented his "Discourses on Epic Poetry," and his "Dialogue on Devices," the former much altered, and enlarged from its original edition; the latter much admired for its ingenuity and novelty.

The following morning he was solemnly introduced into the Pope's presence, who received him most kindly and graciously, and after many commendations of his virtue and merit, said to him, "We have destined for you

the laurel crown, that it may henceforth remain as much honoured by your wearing it, as it has heretofore conferred honour on those who have worn it."

Tasso kissed the Pope's feet, according to custom; and returned thanks with much humility, for his kind expressions, and for the honour proposed; showing, however, no symptoms of pride or of gladness at the announcement, as if ever foreseeing his approaching decease, and at last freed from the "fatal garment," which had so long cleft to him, the love of the vain distinctions of the world.

A continuance of stormy weather prevented the immediate execution of the ceremony. Tasso made all the delays he could, and it was put off till the spring should offer a bright day and clear sunshine, to adorn and illuminate the arrangements.

Meanwhile the city was resounding with preparations. The Vatican, whence the procession

was to start, the streets through which it was to pass, the Capitol, where the Pope was to set the crown, with his own hand, upon the poet's forehead, were all to be magnificently adorned for the occasion. Prelates, princes, nobles, professors, and students, were thronging from all quarters into the city to witness the triumph. All the bards of Italy were inditing peans for the occasion, with universal emulation.

But there was no glow on the pallid, calm cheek of the poet. Ercole Tasso, his kinsman, presented to him one of these complimentary sonnets, reading it aloud with great emphasis, in a large assembly.—

Ah, mighty Rome! how prov'st thou now to men,
That thy great spirit thou canst ne'er disown.
Thine ancient meed's fair lustre hast thou thrown
Round the new victories of the sacred pen.
Tasso thou circlest with thy jocund train;
Tasso thou pourest in close throngs to crown;

Triumphant Tasso dost thou high enthrone;
Till with thy chiefs he strives on glory's plain:
And the world hears, and cries of them in scorn,
That they, who once eclips'd all other light,
Now by their own eclipse shed brighter morn.
Aye wert thou Rome in thy imperial might
To honour worth magnanimous—but to-day
Justice, not favour, thy rewards display.

Tasso's only answer was Seneca's striking line:

Magnifica verba mors prope admota excutit.

The flattering words death drawing nigh cuts short.

CHAPTER VIII.

DEATH.

Tasso's oak stands over a rock in the garden of the Hieronymite monastery of Saint Onofrio, on the Janiculum. The monastery is small and homely; the garden, neglected now, with a few kitchen plants struggling amongst weeds, that grow rank and wild over it. There are banks which seem once to have been terraces; and water, once probably a dancing little rivulet, now unconfined to its bed, gushes out here and there through the turf, and makes it

damp and marshy. The tree, too, is but a wreck, though a stately one. The largest and finest branches have dropped, or been broken off. It is a sweet quiet place, withdrawn from the noise of the city, not much disturbed by visitors, with a magnificent prospect before it.

Here the enormous dome, and mountain palace of the Vatican, there Tiber in his deep bed, flowing sleepily under his bridges; a few fragments of ruins on his banks; the city, bounded by the Pincian hill, and the Capitol, and the Palatine Mount spreading out on the other side of the river; the rising sun, it may be, mantling it in misty robes of flame and gold. You see, indeed, none of the greater remains of the ancient city, the view is not equal to that from the Capitol; nevertheless it is a place,—for the turf is dry under the tree,—to lie and moralize for innumerable hours.

The shadow of the oak will cover you from

the sun, the remoteness and quietude of the little monastery save you in general from the pest of interruption. You may glance over the sweet wild "Legends of Ancient Rome," or Livy's long, magnificent triumphant declamation, or Tully's mighty pomp of eloquence, and elaborate but impassioned oratory; or the keen sarcastic elegance of Sallust: or the epigrammatic and pregnant antithesis of Tacitus; or your favourite chaunt of epic and lyric bard; or the biting verses of the satirist. But the book will soon fall from your hand, and all the mighty visions of ancient Roman history,

> Archi superbi di superbi cori—
> Teatri eccelsi, e simolacri ornati,
> Antichi Padri, Cavalieri armati,
> Consuli, Tribuni, Regi, e Imperadori,*

will sweep in stately pageant before you, as the yellow waters of the Tiber, or the outline of

* Sanazzarro.

the Capitol, attract your eye. Or if it falls upon the dome and palace beside you, the different though really mightier, and more awful Papal histories will arise and live around you. The martyrdoms of Apostles, the growth of the young Church, the fugitive Athanasius, the mission of Augustin, the first Gregories, the Innocents, the Bonifaces; the monk Luther ascending the same steps which the monk Hildebrand had trodden long before. The concourse of nations at the Jubilees, the wild sack of the city by the Germans and Spaniards. The turbulence of the barons and people, when the name of Roman was the vilest of reproaches. Ambassadors, missionaries, monks, streaming out and returning back, with tidings in all languages, from every region under heaven. Dreadful shapes of error and corruption, mingling with the glories of Everlasting Truth. The past, the present, the future, of the great spiritual world, over which the Visible hangs like a thin veil of mist.

Or if the mind wearies with these solemn, and terrible, and eternal contemplations, the forms and works of the chiefs of painting and statuary; or, the chivalrous figures and gay dreams, and melancholy fancies of romantic minstrels, and poets will pass more lightly before you.

The aged tree will shake its rustling boughs over your head, and the struggling waters will gurgle amid the herbs beneath your feet, and the flow of Tiber, and hum of Rome, will faintly mingle with the whisper of the garden; the white convent walls will look spectrally through the pale green olives around them; and, perhaps, the phantom of Tasso seem to sit and moralize beside you, underneath the branches of his own oak.

For here, whenever he was in Rome, according to the tradition of the monastery, did he often come and hide himself from the busy society of the city and court. Hither,

most probably, when dwelling in the Vatican, would he often ramble along the brow of the Janiculum, either to enjoy the devout conversation of the few peaceful monks who tenanted the cells, or to walk with them up and down the terraced height; or to lie alone in the shade studying, or musing over all the historical treasures stored away in his wonderful memory, and naturally evoked by the prospect; or else, reviving and reviewing the strange melancholy dream of life through which he had passed, and endeavouring to unravel its complicated thread; and communing with solitude, and learning heavenly wisdom, and teaching himself, as he says, to weep and mourn for his sins, and preparing himself for the "Heavenly Jerusalem."

His biographers do not mention these visits, but this is the tradition of the monastery, and his earnest request to be transferred to St. Onofrio, when his last sickness overtook him,

seems to indicate that he knew and loved the spot, and was acquainted with the character of its inmates.

It was a haunt suited to the decline of life, the glow of whose sunset rested now upon Tasso; for the tide of his fortunes seemed at length to be changing; all things began to wear with him an aspect of prosperity. Honours and renown seemed exhausting themselves for his advancement. Those deemed highest and greatest upon earth vied in doing him reverence. Independence also and comfort, so long vainly yearned for, were on the point of pouring in upon him. The Pope assigned him a regular pension of two hundred scudi. The Prince of Avellino agreed to pay him an annuity of two-hundred ducats, and a considerable sum at once, in addition, thus raising him immediately to competence and ease. The Papal nephews, and the whole

Court were anxious to show him every possible kindness. His favourite printer, Ingegneri, was ever at his side, to take down at once every verse which he composed, or every sentence which he framed. He was able to complete the sacred poem of the "Creation," on which he had set his heart, though it still wanted the last polishing touch of his pen.

His recently published discourses, and dialogues, arrived safely from Naples. He received unnumbered compliments for his second "Jerusalem," the darling offspring of his later life. He was only in his fifty-second year, when all things looked thus smilingly upon him; and now the month of April, A.D. 1595, the time of his coronation, was just come, and all things were in readiness for its splendid celebration.

At this moment, his prophetic forebodings were fulfilled. He had eaten some sweet cakes,

or macaroons, which had been presented to him, on his journey from Naples, and had felt sickly, and in pain, ever afterwards.

And now the illness increased upon him. He perceived that his days were numbered, and his end imminent. He immediately requested Cardinal Cintio's permission to withdraw into the convent of San Onofrio, and there make his last preparations for eternity. He "selected that monastery, partly for its salubrity, partly for the friendship, and affection, which he bore towards its tenants." With great grief, the Cardinal gave his consent at once, and conveyed him to his destination in his own carriage.

A heavy rain was falling, so that when the fathers saw the Cardinal's chariot ascending the hill, toward their gates, they, with their Prior, hastened forth to meet it, judging that it would not come at such a time, except on some business of importance.

They received their visitor with respect, and

tenderness. Tears came into their eyes, as he said that he was come to die among them. They conducted him to one of their best apartments, and used every possible means to restore and revive him, and every possible argument to encourage him. His illness, however, was beyond the reach of medicine, and his expectation of death firm and continual.

He wrote to take farewell of his friend, Costantini, before he left the world. "What will my Antonio feel, when he hears of his Tasso's death? and the tidings, in my judgment, will soon arrive; for I feel that I am at the end of my life, never having been able to discover any remedy for the painful disorder, which, in addition to my usual complaints, has just swept upon me, like a rapid torrent, by which I clearly see myself hurried rapidly away, without possibility of check. It is not the time now to enlarge on my obstinate ill-fortune, for fear I should speak of the ingratitude of

the world, which has determined to have the triumph of bringing me to the grave a beggar, whereas I once used to think that the age, which, despite all gainsayers, derived such glory from my writings, would not have left me unrewarded. I have had myself conveyed to the monastery of San Onofrio, where I now am, not only because the air is praised by the physicians, more than that of any other part of Rome, but rather that from this eminence, and with the conversation of these devout fathers, I may begin my 'conversation in Heaven.' Pray God for me, and be sure that as I have always loved, and honoured you in this present life, I will do the same in the other truer life also; that life which consists not in feigned, but true charity. I commend you, and myself, to the Divine Grace."

On the 10th of April, he grew worse; fever ensued; and the physicians began to despair of his recovery. The tidings spread over the city,

and diffused an universal gloom, and sorrow. On the seventh day of the fever, Cesalpini, the Pope's physician, and an old friend of Tasso's, announced to him that there was no chance of his recovery. Tasso embraced him with a tranquil countenance, and thanked him, with fervour, for the announcement; and then immediately raising his eyes, and keeping them fixed on Heaven, with yet greater earnestness and affection, he gave humble thanks to the merciful God, who was pleased at last, after so many and violent tempests, to bring him thus to the desired harbour.

Tasso, we have seen, was devoutly inclined. He went astray in youth. Still, the remembrances of childhood, the memory especially of his first early communion, had ever remained with him as a perpetual rebuke in the days of sin and vanity, calling him to higher, and better pursuits, though he had not sufficient courage to accept the summons. Before his misfor-

tunes under some strong check of conscience, he had purposed finding refuge with San Carlo Borromeo. His calamities overtook him before his resolution was matured. Then the struggle was severe.

He was wonderfully upheld through his long wrestle with adversity. In his protracted, and accumulated miseries, his pride was broken, his character chastened, strengthened, purified. And now the time for receiving his last communion was come, and the peace which he had vainly longed for, and the blessings denied him upon earth, were opening upon him in another, and eternal world.

From the hour of that announcement of his death, and that heavenward thanksgiving, to translate Manso's words, "he spoke no more of anything relating to this life, or to his fame after death, but turning altogether toward heavenly glories, thought of nothing save preparing himself for that high eternal flight,

which he hoped soon to make. Toward this, he began to exalt himself, raising himself up on two strong wings, the one diffidence of himself, the other confidence in God, and His compassionate Mother, toward whom he had showed much devotion; and disburdening himself of every worldly weight by the strength of Holy Sacraments, which he would receive in the church below his apartments, where he had himself carried, the morning following his death stroke, in despite of his weakness. He there received the penitential absolution from the hand of the priest, and afterward the Holy Host from the altar.

"He was carried back to his bed in the arms of the brethren. The Prior asked him if he intended to make a will. He answered, that during his life he had had so little care, and so little advantage of worldly goods, that he did not feel himself bound to take much trouble about them after death; so that there was no

necessity for his making a will. The Prior then asked him where he would be buried, and he desired to be buried in their church, if they would deign to honour his ashes so far. The Prior replied that the congregation would esteem it a great honour to themselves, and that they, therefore, requested him to leave some written memorandum of his wish, and that they were also very desirous that he should compose some epitaph for his tomb. Tasso smiled, and said that a simple tablet would suffice to cover his grave.

"Then turning to Father Gabriel Toritti, his confessor, he said, 'Father, do you write that I return my soul to God, who gave it me, my body to the earth, whence I derived it, in the church of Saint Onofrio, and that of my goods and writings I make Cardinal Cintio my heir, praying him to restore to Signor Gianbatista Manso the little picture which he had painted

of me, and which he has only lent, and not given me; and to the monastery I bequeath this sacred image of my most gracious Redeemer.'

"And so saying, he took in his hand a silver crucifix, which he kept at the head of his bed, a work of singular skill, given him by Pope Clement, with many indulgences annexed to the blessed image; and this is preserved with great reverence in the monastery to this day.

"Then Torquato, all intent on the perilous journey he was about to undertake, lay the seven following days, that is till the fourteenth day of his attack, continually communing with his Saviour, and so abstracted from earthly things, and so sensible of heavenly things, that all the bystanders, of whom there were many every day, felt consolation and compunction together. This was especially the case with his confessor, who after his death testified to many friends

that, for many years before his death, he had never discovered in him any trace of deadly sin.

"When he had reached the fourteenth day of his illness, and the last but one of his life, feeling himself growing weaker every hour, and perceiving that he was on the point of dissolution, he desired to strengthen himself once more with the Viaticum of the holiest body of our Lord Jesus Christ. As he was unable to rise from his bed, it was brought to him by the Prior. On his entering the room, he beholding it, cried out with a loud voice, "Expectans Expectavi Dominum," and then devoutly receiving it, united himself with Him, with such affection and humility, that the company present, as they looked wondering on, could not help seeing in his manner an earnest of future blessedness.

"Afterwards, as a practised wrestler, he desired to be anointed with the Extreme Unction, to

render himself vigorous, and well prepared against any assaults of the infernal enemy. And so great was his faith, that the privilege was accorded him, of not being troubled with any terrible or painful visions in this his happy end.

"In the meanwhile, Cardinal Cintio, informed by the physicians that Torquato had only a few hours of life remaining, proceeded to visit him, and convey to him, in the name of the Pope, his solemn benediction, which is in general only bestowed in such a way on Cardinals, or people of the highest importance. He received it with the greatest reverence, and thanked both the Pope and Cardinal, saying that this was the coronation, which he had gladly come to Rome to receive, hoping that with it he should triumph on the following day in the heavenly Capitol, where he trusted to repay his holiness and the Cardinal for so great a favour.

"The Cardinal asked him whether he could assign him any task, or do anything for

his further satisfaction. He replied that he rejected no favour, which could benefit his soul, at the hands of his holiness, or at his hands; but that for his body, it would suffice that it should be privately buried in the church of Saint Onofrio, where he was. As to anything else, he ought to have recommended his children to him, for so he esteemed his writings, the offspring of his mind, since he had never, he said, any other. But since God had withheld him from finishing the hymn which he had begun on the Divine Works—he meant his poem of the "Creation"—he besought the Cardinal to have this, and all his other works, and in particular, his "Jerusalem," which he thought the most imperfect of all, burned without delay; that he would esteem this a greater favour, because, being dispersed among so many hands, it would require much trouble to collect them. Nevertheless, he hoped that it would not be impossible, if his Eminence

would condescend to undertake the business. And this he said so earnestly, that the Cardinal, fearing to disturb him by openly denying his petition, gave him such an answer as might lead him to imagine that it would be executed.

"Tasso was much rejoiced, and added, that since he had now received all that he could desire in this life by the Cardinal's visit, and the papal benediction which he had brought him, he besought that till the following noon, during the short interval of life yet remaining, he might be left alone with his Christ, taking up the crucifix as he spoke, and with those who could act as mediators between his own sinfulness and the Lord's infinite mercy. This was done; for the Cardinal took his leave, with difficulty refraining from tears, which indeed burst forth from his and all his attendants' eyes, as soon as they had left the chamber.

"After this, no one was admitted except his

confessor, and some fathers of approved learning and sanctity, who sang psalms alternately one with another, Torquato joining in it at times, as far as his failing breath allowed. So he remained all the night, and till noon the following day, the 25th of April, Saint Mark the Evangelist's feast, when feeling himself giving way altogether, with his crucifix closely embraced, he began to chaunt the words, "In manus tuas, Domine," (Into thy hands, O Lord); but not having sufficient strength to finish the verse, he ended the short, but glorious, career of his mortal life, to enter, as we ought to hope, on the other immortal career of eternal glory in the heavenly Jerusalem."

Such, then, was the contemporary account and opinion of Tasso's end, as viewed by those of his own communion. If some expressions in it are painful, and shock us, in the concluding hope, at least, all may readily join.

Tasso lived fifty-one years, one month, and

fourteen days,—about the duration of Virgil's existence. He died, however, prematurely old, exhausted by his long sufferings, his unceasing labours, his disappointments, his melancholy. The honours which had been lost to him in his life were paid to him after his death. Rome and Italy seemed overspread with lamentations. The literary world mourned its brightest ornament, the "fall of its almost sole remaining pillar." His friends and acquaintances were inconsolable. Cardinal Cintio could not rest, so vexed was he at having been too dilatory in his preparations to distinguish Tasso's worth with the well-merited crown. He consoled himself by resolving to pay as much of this honour as was possible to the poet's corpse. The body, therefore, was arrayed in a splendid gown, the laurel which had been prepared was wreathed round the head, and thus laid on a stately bier, Tasso was borne from the monastery where he died, through the Borgo, and the piazza of

Saint Peter's, and back to the church of Saint Onofrio, with a grand display of candles, followed by a great number of various monastic brethren, by all the courtiers of the Papal Palace, by the household of the two Cardinal nephews, by the professors of theology and philosophy, and a crowd of nobles and scholars.

All thronged to see, for the last time, the man who had conferred such distinction on his age, and who concentrated in himself so many different kinds of renown. Painters and sculptors trode upon each other, in their anxiety to catch a clear impression of the celebrated lineaments, which had attracted such high affections, and been wasted and withered by such unrivalled afflictions, in order to commit them to the canvas, or the marble, with as much accuracy as possible.

After the procession, he was privately buried in the evening, in the church of Saint Onofrio, as he had directed on his death-bed. The

Cardinal, his patron, intended to celebrate afterwards a grand funeral solemnity in his honour. Splendid decorations, complimentary epitaphs, sonnets, and orations, were to proclaim the talents, genius, attainments, worth, and piety, of the deceased, and the esteem and affection of the Cardinal. But, as if Tasso's fortune was bound to him in this world even after life was over, all these grand preparations came to nothing.

Two years afterwards, Manso visited Rome, and hastened to view his friend's resting-place. He found no monument of any kind marking his burial-place, nor any inscription commemorating his name. He made the most urgent instances with Cintio, both directly and through other Cardinals, but without any satisfactory result, as Cintio would do nothing himself, nor suffer any one to supply his place, professing that he could not make over so dear and honourable a charge to any one beside himself,

but still indefinitely delaying the execution of these intentions. Marquis Manso, therefore, besought the brethren of the monastery to pay some simple tribute of reverence to his friend until a more becoming memorial should be raised. Accordingly, they placed a small marble slab over Tasso's grave, with the following plain inscription, which may be read to this day:

D. O. M.
TORQUATO TASSI
OSSA
HIC JACENT
HOC NE NESCIUS
ESSES HOSPES
FRES. HUJUS ECCL.
P. P.
M D C I.
OBIIT ANNO MDXCV.

Eight more years elapsed. Cardinal Cintio still did nothing; and then died. At last, Cardinal Bonifazio Bevilacqua, of Ferrara, whose parents had been great friends of Tasso,

anxious also to honour one who had so honoured his native city, erected that more stately, but far less moving monument, which is on the left hand as you enter the church, with the portrait of the poet in relief, and the following bald inscription:

TORQUATI TASSI POETIE
HEU QUANTUM IN HOC UNO NOMINE
CELEBRITATIS AC LAUDUM!
OSSA HUC TRANSTULIT HIC CONDIDIT
BONIF. CARD. BEVILAQUA
NE QUI VOLITAT VIVUS PER ORA VIRUM
EJUS RELIQUA PARUM SPLENDIDO LOCO
COLERENTUR QUÆRERENTUR
ADMONUIT VIRTUTIS AMOR
ADMONUIT ADVERSUS PATRIÆ ALUMNUM
ADVERSUS PARENTUM AMICUM PIETAS
VIX. ANN. LI. NAT. MAGNO. FLORENTISS. SÆC. BONO
AN. MDXLIV.
VIVET HAUT FALLIMUR ÆTERNUM IN HOMINUM
MEMORIA . ADMIRATIONE . CULTU.

Many other honours have been subsequently

paid to him. Several medals of him have been struck. A colossal statue was erected of him in the principal piazza of Bergamo, in flowing robes, with the laurel crown on his head and a book in his hand. On the pedestal is the simple inscription: "Torquato Tasso." Another similar statue was raised in Padua by the students of that University, with the inscription glorying in so renowned a scholar. Gems also, and cameos, were cut into his likeness. In Bergamo, in Rome, and other places, portraits of him by Federigo Zuccheri and other painters, represent him in the different periods of his life.

Perhaps, however, the most interesting and accurate representation of the poet is the cast in San Onofrio, taken from him when he lay dead there. Its aspect strikingly corresponds with his history. Its lines, its developments tell plainly of genius, imagination, energy, thought, reach of mind, and also of deep

suffering and protracted anguish, mastered by resolution and patience, but shattering the vessel in the struggle. At the same time, the arrangement of the hair, the delicacy of the features, and the carefulness of the dress, seem to signify that attention to himself, which had once been the jealousy of honour, and a quick pride easily offended. The head, however, is much smaller for a tall man than Manso's description would lead us to imagine.

He who knew him so well, tells us that he was very tall, and most excellently proportioned, though evincing rather strength and activity than elegance. His skin was very fair, though pale and colourless through suffering and application. His hair and beard, to both of which he paid great attention, (this is shewn in his bust), were of a light brown colour, fine and delicate. His head was large and square, his forehead remarkably so, with a kind of depression over either temple. His hair was

carefully divided from it, hanging down in curls on either side. He was, however, inclined to baldness as his years advanced. His eyebrows were black, and finely pencilled, and well separated from each other. His eyes were rather large, grey and bright, such as Homer assigns to Minerva. He used to move them slowly and solemnly, as much devoted to abstract and celestial contemplations.

His cheeks were long, and naturally thin, and almost supernaturally so at last, from his continued indisposition and afflictions. His nose large, and aquiline, his mouth also somewhat large, his lips thin, teeth white, and small, but rather crowded. His voice was clear, and sonorous; he appears also to have been a fine singer. His whole frame was admirably formed for strength, and activity, though very lean. He was accordingly distinguished for his skill, both in the chase, and the lists. "In all

chivalrous exercises, in arming, riding, jousting, he had no need to envy any man."

He was in short, according to his biographer, a paragon of manly beauty, and activity, full of stately majesty, both in face and person. He omits, however, a defect or two, as he stammered sometimes in his speech, and was latterly, at least, short-sighted. His mental endowments, however, exceeded his bodily.

Notwithstanding all the difficulties which he had to encounter, and "poverty's unconquerable bar," his reading was almost universal according to the age, his powers of application marvellous, the reach of his memory almost supernatural. His imagination was vivid, and yet in composing, under strict, perhaps too strict, control. He was a deep thinker, and acute reasoner, and certainly very ready in the use of all his varied attainments, and knowledge. Very different estimates have been formed of his poetical

powers; but it is not my purpose to criticise what has been so often criticised.

His chief fault, both in verse, and still more in prose, is an over-indulgence in words, and in recondite allusions, the fault of the age altogether. His favourite books were Plato, Virgil, and Dante, of the latter of whom he was a devout admirer, and eloquent defender. In his later years, he addicted himself to the study of theology, of Thomas Aquinas particularly, and above all, of St. Augustin, whose opinions, indeed, and expressions are very manifest all through Tasso's last work, the "Mondo Creato."

In his manner, he was grave and stately, and in general reserved, though always peculiarly courteous, and obliging. He was mostly earnest, and serious, though occasionally sarcastic, and witty in conversation. The sayings attributed to him need not be recorded, as they are principally to be found in "Epictetus,"

or the biographies of most distinguished men.

His moral qualities, his virtues, and faults, his childhood's devotion, and filial piety, his youthful passions, his affectionate disposition, his capacity for friendship, his power of attaching friends, his addiction to day-dreams, his desire of praise, his deep-seated pride, his aptness to take offence, his readiness to forgive, his unweared industry, his indomitable resolution, his restlessness after his long imprisonment, his habitual melancholy, so powerful, yet which so strongly wrestled with, the gradual purification of his character, the progress of his religious life have been sufficiently traced out in the past delineation of his history.

The ordeal through which he passed, was severe and searching. It was apparently under the Divine blessing, his unwearied power of application, nurtured latterly by a living faith, and all the means of grace, which saved him

from despair, or from the madness towards which he was driven, and brought him out at last into safety through all those wanderings, and trials, through that dependant condition, that shame and scorn, that imprisonment and ill-treatment, that poverty and want, that continual disappointment, that life of unceasing, harassing vexation.

When he was asked by some young Sorrentines, what was most needful for students, he replied, perseverance; and what next? perseverance: and what in the third place? perseverance. His own rule, it is much like Cicero's, seems to have carried him not only to the summit of literary renown, but to have formed in him the grace of constancy, which afterwards, as he said in Santa Anna, was "his one only rock of refuge." And this, indeed, is one great use of early application, too often overlooked, that it forms the habits of resolution, energy, and constancy, not for study only, but for

far higher uses. Only let it be blessed with that, which, his biographer tells us, was the light of Tasso's later years, continual meditation on the Incarnation and Passion of the Saviour, the contemplation of His cross and the charity which flows from it. These will sanctify and settle upon a sure foundation that fortitude which, without them, is in truth but stubbornness, and must shatter itself at last against the decrees of God. These will transform it into into the image of His infinite patience, on whose Atoning Sacrifice it rests.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

RONSARD AND THE COURT OF CHARLES IX.

THE Court* of France has often been famous for its literary and poetical character. In the time of Charles IX., notwithstanding the disorders and miseries of his reign, its reputation was brilliant. A new era in French literature was just commencing. The classical masterpieces of antiquity were beginning to exercise a paramount influence, and the Court was the centre of the world of letters. The royal family was poetical.

Charles of Orleans, the father of Louis XII, so long prisoner in England, was a bard of great merit. Some of his poems are even now popular,

* Will there ever be a court there again?

and admired for their fine tone of chivalrous melancholy. He introduced the love of song into the royal blood.* Louis, his son, when he succeeded Charles VIII. patronised poets. The celebrated Marot began his poetical career by chanting the affection of Louis and Anne of Brittany, his wife. He was afterwards valet de chambre, first to Margaret of Navarre, and then to Francis I., and high in favour with that monarch, till, on an accusation of heresy, brought against him by a rival poet, Sagon, and taken up by the Sorbonne, he was, after repeated imprisonments, compelled to save himself from severer punishments* still, by a voluntary expatriation. His royal mistress, Margaret of Navarre, the first of the three Margarets, whose beauty, talents, acquirements, and poetical names inspired so many compliments and flowers of metaphor and song to the rhymesters of the age, was a poetess. Francis I., his royal master, wrote verses. Henry II. rhymed his attachment to Diana of

* This reminds us of Tasso's fear when he thought himself accused and suspected of heresy, and is another instance, in a different country, of the use to which such accusations were turned even by contending bards.

Poitiers. The poetical "Adieux to France" of Mary Stuart, the wife of Henry's son, Francis II., cut off so young, and so unfortunately for his bride, are too well known to need further mention. The other two Margarets, Margaret of Valois, sister of Henry II., married afterwards to the Duke of Savoy; and Margaret, Henry's daughter and sister of the last three Valois, married to Henry IV., who afterwards divorced her; Jeanne d'Albret also, the daughter of the first Margaret, the strongminded wife of the vacillating Antony of Bourbon, and mother of Henry IV.; finally, Charles IX. himself, all were more or less guilty of poetry.

It was natural, therefore, that they should patronise and favour authors of inferior rank, though superior ability. Their rank was too pre-eminent to admit of jealousy, or if Nero's envy contradict such a theory, they, whatever were their faults, were of too chivalrous a spirit to entertain so base a feeling.

This continued encouragement of the Muses by the Royal Family, had by the time of Charles IX. raised up a multitude of poets in the metropolis and the provinces of France; and as the sovereigns, for the most part, rewarded their poetical dependants,

either by attaching them as servants to their own persons, or by preferring them to ecclesiastical benefices without insisting on their performing their ecclesiastical duties, they had in general a large number of such retainers in attendance upon their court.

At the time of Tasso's visit, "the Pleiad" was in its zenith of renown: for these poets were illustrious and glorious in their own eyes, and the eyes of their companions. They promised themselves and one another an immortality of honour; and amongst them seven were judged to bear the palm, and were advanced by themselves to the dignity of a constellation. These seven stars were Pontus de Tyard, Du Bellay, Jean Dorat, Antoine de Baif, Remi Belleau, Jodelle, and Ronsard.

There were, at the same time, many other stars of inferior magnitude, both male and female. Among the former was many names, Cayet, Bouchet, Tahureau de Pibrac, Pasquier, Jean de la Peruse, Françoise de Belleforest, Roland de Bertholaud, Jacques de Fouilloux, Jacques de Romieu, Claude de Pontoux, Claude Gauchet, Claude Turrin, Jean Passerat, one of the writers in the famous "Satire Menippée," the Etiennes printers, and authors, and scholars, gene-

ration after generation, like the Aldi in Italy; men of very different ranks in society, some noblemen, some soldiers, some statesmen, some clergymen, some tradesmen, some originally servants, and also of very different styles of composition, some dramatic, some lyric, some pastoral, some didactic, some serious, some satirical; some distinguished in every kind of metre and subject. Among those of the other sex, we may mention Jeanne d'Albret, as we have noticed, and others of the royal family, dabblers at least in the Pierian Well. There were Pernette de Guillet, Madeleine and Catherine des Roches, mother and daughter, Marie de Romieu, Antoinette de Loynès, and above all, the celebrated Lyonnese, Louise Labé, surnamed La belle Cordière, deeply read in Greek and Latin, Italian, and Spanish; an authoress in prose as well as verse, graceful in person, beautiful in face; a most accomplished musician, with the voice of an angel; skilled in the use of the needle; and what is more, a most expert sportsman and cavalier, rivalling the most renowned champions of that warlike age in the management of the steed, the lance, the sword; who, at sixteen distinguished herself by her valour at the siege of Perpignan, and,

after several campaigns, retired to chaunt her "fierce wars," and I am afraid, "faithless loves," on the banks of her native Rhone. Thus she sings her own prowess :—

Qui m'eust vu lors en armes fiere aller,
Porter la lance, et bois faire voler,
Le devoir faire en l'estour furieux,
Piquer, volter le cheval glorieux,
Pour Bradamante, ou la haute Marphise,
Seur de Roger, il m' eust, possible, prise.

She, however, died somewhat early in life, a little before Tasso visited Paris.

So many and so various were the ornaments of the literary heavens in France at that period; but among them the "Seven Pleiads" shone pre-eminent, and of these seven, Ronsard was infinitely the brightest.

No poet, except perhaps Lope di Vega, ever acquired and preserved by his writings such reputation and favour in his life-time. Words seemed to fail the critics, and metaphors his brother bards, when they commented on his verses, or resounded his praises. As if conscious himself of his unquestionable superiority, he is not sparing in his own

commendations; take for example, a stanza from a hymn to his lute:

Par toy je plais, et par toy je suis leu;
C'est toy qui fais, che Ronsard soit esleu
Harpeur Français, et quand on le rencontre,
Qu'avec le doigt par la rue on le monstre.*
Si je plais donc; si je sçay contenter;
Si mon renom la France veut chanter;
Si de mon front les estoiles je passe;
Certes mon Luth, cela vient de ta grace.

His father was a chevalier of the order of Saint Michael. Pierre, this was his christian name, was first sent to the college of Navarre; at nine years old, however, he became a page of the court, and was attached to the suite of James Stuart. With him he passed into Scotland for three years. Then returning to France, he visited Germany, and served under Langey in Piedmont. Shipwrecks, wars, adventures of all kinds occupied his youth till he was twenty years of age. A most fortunate deafness then, as his contemporaries said, overtook him, and restored him to France.

* Monstrari digito prætereuntium—
Digito monstrari, et dicier, Hic est.

He betook himself to study, under Jean Dorat, at the College du Coqueret; there he met his future brethren, admirers, and annotators, such as Belleau, Du Bellay, Turnebus, Muretus. All were astonished and electrified at the daring genius of the youth. They saluted him as the rising Virgil and Homer of his country. They watched his intense and protracted studies with the deepest interest. He translated the Plutus of Aristophanes, and it was acted at the University amidst a tumult of applauses.

After a seven years' residence at the college, he followed his reputation to court, where, after a short rivalry with Mellin de Saint Gelais, he eclipsed all competitors. He won the prize at the "Floral games" of Toulouse, and was proclaimed the "Poëte Français par excellence." A massive silver Minerva was presented to him by the magistrates of that city. He was regarded thenceforth as the legislator of Parnassus.

Margaret of Savoy and Henry II. exalted him by their applauses to the pinnacle of glory. Mary Stuart gave him her friendship during the short reign of her husband Francis. Charles IX., young as he was, esteemed him yet more highly; he loaded him with praises, and gifts, abbeys, and

benefices, and even with poetical compliments from his own royal pen. To these royal flatteries was added the universal homage of his own compatriots, and the veneration of foreigners. No one, it was said, took pen in hand without celebrating his verses. Aspiring youths, if they but rubbed against his gown, thought immediately that they were becoming poets. His life was a kind of continual hymn, a sort of unceasing apotheosis. He conceived the idea of the "Pleiad." It was adopted and resounded everywhere. Objections, indeed, were made to this or that star. But as to Ronsard, the agreement was universal; his most illustrious contemporaries at once bowed the knee before him.

L'Hopital, who protected his first essays against the court cabal—Duperron, who pronounced his funeral oration—Passerat, who preferred the authorship of one of his odes to the duchy of Milan, the darling object of French ambition—Scaliger, Montaigne, who declares French poetry to have reached the perfection of the antique master-pieces in Ronsard—show by their praises in what estimation his fellow-countrymen held him. Foreigners rivalled them in their applauses. Mary Queen of

Scots, whose departure he so lamented (France expressing by him her regrets in answer to Mary's adieux) sent him a splendid closet of plate from Scotland, with a vase representing Parnassus and Pegasus on its summit inscribed

A Ronsard l'Apollon de la source des Muses.

Queen Elizabeth of England, Mary's cruel rival, sent him a magnificent diamond. Speron Speroni composed an Italian poem in his praise. His works were publicly read and explained in Flanders, England, Germany, Poland. Tasso, as related in his history, counted himself happy in obtaining his approbation of some cantos of his "Jerusalem," which he read to him.

This concert of praises lasted fifty years. In his age and decay, Henry III. and his favourites, the poet Desportes in particular, still reverenced, admired, revered him, as their great teacher and oracle, and example. When he died, all France seemed to weep.

De Thou relates that they celebrated a magnificent funeral service to his honour. The King sent his band. The princes of the blood, a crowd of

courtiers, all persons distinguished for wit or learning assisted. The Parliament of Paris sent a deputation. The throng was so great, that the Cardinal of Bourbon could not penetrate through the press, and was obliged to turn back. The preacher himself could not force his way into the chapel, and was obliged to pronounce the funeral sermon from the stairs. The crowd filled the streets and windows, and even the roofs of the houses.

A thousand elegies bewailed him over the whole country. Marble statues rose to his memory. His history was written immediately. The author, De Thou, fails not to observe that he was born on the very day of the battle of Pavia, as if Heaven took care to bestow on France a sufficient compensation in Ronsard for that terrible disaster.

The poems, the persons, the talents, the misfortunes of Tasso and Camoens, contemporaries as they were, have often been compared,* and the comparison is striking. It is striking in another

* Such comparisons may be found in a note of Dr. Black's, in Adamson's "Life of Camoens," and Lord Strangford's translations from that poet. A translation of the Sonnet which Tasso composed to Camoens, or rather to the Lusiad, is to be found in each.

way to compare their histories with Ronsard's, another contemporary. How different were his circumstances then. How different is his renown now!

Tasso and Camoens are more famous now than when they were alive; but who, what foreigner at least, would know anything of Ronsard, if it were not for his connection either with the history of Tasso, or that of Mary Stuart? In what oblivion are he and his brother Pleiads now wrapped! Not that they were bad poets, at least all of them. They had some power; they had considerable wit; they had much erudition; they had great industry. They had not, however, the one gift of *inspiration*, which alone can confer immortality on the bard. Glance at the "Franciad"* of Ronsard, and compare it with the "Lusiad" or the "Jerusalem," and you will see why the star set.

I add a few lines of Ronsard, lamenting the departure of Mary Stuart, as interesting to English readers; and also a sonnet of Du Bellay, on Rome, as one of the best specimens of his contemporaries' poetry.

* The "Franciad," however, was only begun: Ronsard stopped in his epic after the four first cantos.

As a fair meadow that its flowers doth lose;
As a sweet picture robb'd of all its hues;
As heav'n, if from it all its stars it cast;
The ocean all its waves, the ship its mast,
The wood its leaves, the cavern its affright,
The palace hall its monarch's form of light,
The ring its precious pearl, the cheek its rose;
So weeping France her every grace foregoes,
As from her parts the queenly loveliness,
Which was her flower, her beauty, star, and bliss.

POEMES DE RONSARD.

ROME.

A SONNET BY JOACHIM DU BELLAY.

Pilgrim! that Rome would'st here in Rome recall;
And nought of Rome can'st here in Rome discern;
These palaces, these arches old and stern,
These old stern bulwarks, are what Rome we call.
Behold what pride, what ruin! Mark her fall!
How she who neath her feet the world would spurn,
To conquer all, herself did overturn;
And sank the prey of Time, that swallows all.

Rome is the only monument of Rome,
And nought but Rome herself hath overcome.

Alone the Tiber, flying to the sea,
Remains of Rome. Out on earth's changing pride!
That which is firm by Time o'erthrown we see,
And that which flies alone hath Time defied.

It seems necessary to add a few more specimens of Tasso's poetry. The first, the canzone in honour of the Chapel of the Holy Stable, arranged by the orders of Sistus V., may interest English readers, as Milton's "Ode of the Nativity" seems in some measure taken from it.

The remaining translations describe his feelings and condition in the Hospital of Santa Anna, and as such will reflect light on the history which has been narrated, and, perhaps, justify the reflections made upon it.

TO THE CHAPEL OF THE HOLY STABLE IN SANTA MARIA MAGGIORE.

(THE FIRST TWO STANZAS ARE OMITTED.)

My soul! heav'n parts. Dash'd from ten thousand plumes,
And lamps, and crowns, and rays,
Bright angel light the opening deep illumes.

Mov'd by the clear unfathomable gush
Of the celestial blaze,
(Beside whose beams the noontide sun would blush,)
And the deep harmonies that round them rush,
In awe-struck wonder kneel the shepherd throng,
Wak'd by the strange bright blaze, and pealing song.
Now in the lowly shed, wherein is laid
'Neath night's ambrosial shade,
Who solemn spreads her reverent mantle round,
Of angels and of heav'n the glorious Queen,
(The old man by her seen),
They adore the promis'd Babe, whom they have found
The ass and ox between.
One narrowest room on earth a Wonder folds,
Great as all heav'n in its vast concave holds—

Or greater as I deem. Err I? or see
Each angel soul divine,
And every heavenly sphere here bend the knee.
For Him from east to west empurpled War
Doth all his banners twine,
Lays up his arms, unyokes each flaming car,
Quenching in each wild breast wrath's bickering star.
Nor with herself is earth alone at rest,
The fabled Janus gates together press'd;
Twixt earth and heav'n abiding peace began;
The Living God is Man.
He on Himself shall take the bitter shame,
And bear alone the world's rebuke and woe.
He shall subdue the foe,

Who for our death the old subtle lie did frame,
Our Tyrant then became;
The cross He bore for trophy shall display;
And ope from hell to heav'n the living way.

Dumb is Apollo now, his cave, and fount,
And the false deities,
Whose death his Sibyls uttered in their chaunt.
No more his Dafne from the encircling tree
Gives forth her human cries.
The spirits whence they liv'd, by heav'n's decree
Fall with their falling idols, ne'er to be.
Ammon lies prostrate mid his desert heaps,
Where the dread South the sandy billows sweeps,
As sweeps his blast the rough Egean main:
With Mithra's prostrate fane
Lies the great car where Berecynthia drave
Her lions yok'd; now free in woods they roar.
On Crete's or Ida's shore
No more the Corybantian timbrels rave,
That echoing rang of yore.
Anubis, Apis from their altars go
In headlong flight, nor bark, nor bellow now..

The Truth foresung in many a prophet's lay,
In orient glory gleams.
The eternal Glory of the eternal Day.
Speed! Oh ye nations from the ends of earth,
Beneath the star's soft beams,
That light and guide you to the Saviour's birth.

And with the Kings, on whom it shone, pour forth
As to the Lord, the King, the Doom'd to death,
Myrrh, gold, and incense with its odorous breath.
With shepherds praise Him loud. Be not behind
The zeal of rustic mind.
Oh! come with angels, and what spirits bright
Outshine the angels, here exult and sing,
Crown'd mid their glitt'ring ring!
In heavenly, and in human hearts delight
Alike should boundless spring.
Now God is man, man God; thus fervent grace,
And love, exalt the earth, the heav'ns abase!

TO DUKE WILLIAM OF MANTUA.

FROM SANTA ANNA.

Great prince, in prison, and in sickness, I
Faint at the foot of noble Helicon:
On its high peak I see the long-wish'd crown;
Yet not the more can feel one pulse of joy.
Chill horror, icy fear, numb lethargy
Freeze me. In vain mankind would spur me on.
Friends speak: I catch my lyre: with hollow moan
Along its chords the tuneless numbers die.
If arts, if genius, to thee are dear,

For the song's art, that deathless makes thy name,
Bid the soft healing art my body rear:
Let not my hope, my prayer, aye end in shame!
Sure to thy prayers my princely liege will bow;
And my true faith, and his true glory show.

TO DUKE ALFONSO.

Ah, me! who shapes yon thronging shadowy host,
Now wild and sad, now beautiful and bright,
With whom, or else I err, unarm'd I fight
In perilous struggle with each battling ghost?
Doth magic work? or from night's sullen coast
The enchantress Fear the crowding shapes invite?
At whose approach I quiver for affright,
Like shivering rush, or weed on billows tost.

TO SCIPIO GONZAGA.

FROM SANTA ANNA.

Scipio! is Pity dead? or banished far
From royal hearts, and from this dark world driv'n,
Has it soar'd up to dwell with saints in heav'n,

That none for my deep voice of misery care?
Is then the princely faith a jest, and snare—
That princely pledge for my poor freedom giv'n?
Shall this foul cruelty ne'er end, which ev'n
'Twixt death and life here shuts me with despair?
This is a living tomb, where whelm'd I lie
A breathing carcase; for the dead unseal
Its hideous jaws alone. Heav'n hear my cry!
If works of art, of genius, love and zeal,
Win honour, or win pardon, mid mankind,
Be not my prayer for aye swept idly down the wind!

I add, as necessary for confirming and illustrating the history:—

A DISCOURSE ON THE VARIOUS ACCIDENTS OF HIS LIFE, ADDRESSED TO SCIPIO GONZAGA, PRINCE OF THE EMPIRE, AFTERWARDS CARDINAL

PARTS ARE OMITTED, AND PARTS CONDENSED WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

"I know not whether to induce you to take me under your protection, I ought to betake myself to the force of arguments, or the pathos of prayer. On the one side my affliction calls so loud, that the sound of its loud outcries reaches over the universe; so that he who hears not is deaf; he who listens, not

pitiless. On the other hand, the eyes of your understanding are so penetrating, that they could perceive in an instant all the arguments commonly employed by criminals; and what is more, could investigate in an instant the nature of errors, and sins, and the fitness of rewards and punishments, and the duties of justice and mercy—and thus could discern how, after so many afflictions, they should behave toward me, who being God's ministers in this world, should imitate also His justice and clemency.

"If then my misery makes itself heard, and if you by yourself can understand what you should do for me for justice, or for pity's sake, it may seem superfluous that I should weary myself in praying and arguing. Silence, perhaps, would be better. But, as I have found by experience, that silence has been as unprofitable as remonstrance, I will not consider, after the loss of my goods, of quiet, of satisfaction, of reputation, of honour, of liberty, and as it were of life itself, either the trouble or the danger which I run by hazarding words in the attempt to recover some part of what I have lost. I will, therefore, speak with you, and rather with reasonings than prayers, as I know you to be more

reasoning than affectionate; I will, therefore, address you as a well disciplined philosopher.

"All the charges of which I have been accused, and by which I have so unhappily fallen into this state of misery, may be ranged under two heads, Every time that man sins, he sins against God; for God is through all, and in all; and so no one can offend or injure any thing, without outraging a work of God. But there are two ways of transgressing against God, either directly, so to speak; and these will be offences against His Divine Majesty: or indirectly, and these are the offences committed against His creatures. Among the trespasses committed against our neighbour, the worst are those directed against the majesty of Princes, resembling in some degree those rebellions against God, occasioned by the pride or impiety of men.

"There being then so many kinds of sins, I, by my fault, or partly by misfortune, am either calumniated, or accused of several of them; because I have been treated as a rebel against my Prince, injurious toward my friends and acquaintance, and unjust toward myself (if indeed one can be unjust toward one's self), and am banished not

from Naples, or from Ferrara in reality, but from all the world—deprived of all friendships, all society, all communion, all knowledge of affairs, of all attentions, all comfort; rejected from every one's affection; always, and every where, despised and abhorred. This punishment is so grievous, that were it not alleviated by some little hope, death, without doubt, would seem scarcely more severe; perhaps, even less so to a person of greater magnanimity and courage than I pretend to be.

"If, however, this hope is no certain promise of approaching relief, but only a mockery, or such consolation as is given to those whose life is despaired of, I can scarcely decide whether it is an alleviation or aggravation of my punishment, when I see continually the relief I had promised myself, vanish away unfulfilled. I might say my punishment was as cruel as that of the parricide—and yet then I should speak falsely; for every pain inflicted on me is softened, not only by hope, but by the manner of its infliction. Neither, indeed, could a punishment deserving the name of cruel be expected from the Prince in whose power I am—and that which I am suffering is more the work of my ill-fortune; occasioned by many accidental causes, which have

strangely united to overwhelm me; and first began, when he was rather intending to favour than chastise me.

"Even a parricide, however, if once absolved, would not be condemned again for the same offence: he too who killed his mother, when absolved by the judgment of Apollo, was not persecuted by men: and I, who by the judgment, not of Apollo, but of the true and omnipotent God (may I dare so to speak) have been miraculously delivered from the hands and jaws of death, which once, and again, and a third time, came open-mouthed to devour me—wherefore am I now chastised afresh of man? Is it not enough for them, if my faults are as great as they imagine, that I, like a second Orestes, should be tormented by the remorse of my conscience, and the shame of my lost reputation? And if they judge them too slight to be in themselves a sufficient punishment, why do they renew the chastisement, certainly *not light, nor ordinary, nor usual, nor ever heard of, or imagined.* I am accused of youthful sins. I will not retort on my accusers. If it was the error of youth, and human nature to transgress, it was certainly the malice of my fate which occasioned, that when I

was beginning to reform my life, when my fame and reputation were spreading, and I increasing them, by honourable labours, my good name should suddenly be changed into infamy, and my manhood spotted and blamed for defects of which it was innocent.

"However, whatsoever the charges brought against me may be, for I know not exactly what they are; they certainly are but such (unless my conscience deceives me grievously) as deserve rather pardon, or oblivion, than punishment and new accusations. However, if no new charge were brought against me, the mention of my youthful sins so diligently raked up by my enemies, would soon be hushed and forgotten. But the accusations brought against me of disloyalty to my Prince, mixed with the other original accusations, occasioned such a torrent, or rather deluge of misfortunes, that no human bound or bank, nor the kindness of that noble Princess, who laboured earnestly in my welfare, were able to restrain it."

[He then appeals to God, declaring how he confessed his sins, carnal transgressions, and worldly vanity, and his doubts on various points of faith, as narrated in the history.]

"And thou knowest," he continues, "that when thy lash began to smite me in my *tenderest point*, namely, my *honour and reputation*, I fled not from Thee but rather sought to unite myself to Thee. The coldness of my heart began, if not to burn, at least to thaw with love toward Thee. And though we are assured that the lukewarm are worse than the frozen-hearted, this happens only when the lukewarm are satisfied with themselves, and their lukewarmness not passing out of coldness into zeal; and I was not contented with my lukewarmness—for I felt that with this lukewarm desire of Thy Grace, there mingled a most ardent desire of honour and worldly glory. I was cheered, however, because the heat of concupiscence and carnal desire was, so to speak, altogether quenched within me; neither to acknowledge the whole truth, was I displeased with myself for my ambition, having read in Cornelius Tacitus, that ambition is the last * garment

* Quam etiam sapientibus cupido gloriæ novissima exuitur.

It is taken from Plato,—

τὴν γὰρ κενοδοξίαν, ὡς τελευταῖον χιτῶνα
ἡ ψυχὴ πέφυκεν ἀποτίθεσθαι.—PHÆDO.

It is repeated by Milton,—

Fame is the spur which the clear spirit doth raise,
That last infirmity of noble minds.—LYCIDAS.

of which the wise man strips himself. Such was the nature of my love toward Thee: and in this condition by more frequent attendance on the divine offices, and many daily prayers, I continued to keep myself: my faith also was daily strengthened; my understanding presumed less on its own power. And now, in great measure, I smiled at my past doubts, not because I could solve them, or knew exactly what Thou art, or understood Thy Nature or Essence, but because I knew that Thou art incomprehensible; and that it was madness to dream of comprehending Thee who art infinite, in the narrow limits of our human understanding, or measure with the measures of human reason Thy goodness, Thy justice, Thy immeasurable Omnipotence.

"I should have judged myself blessed if it had been granted me, not as Paul to soar into heaven, or as Moses to ascend the mountain, but as at least one amongst the purified, to approach the cloud in which Thou veilest Thyself, and separate myself in some measure from the multitudes. It seemed to me enough, at the foot of the Mount of Contemplation, with ears and eyes cleansed from pollution, to hear at least the voice and the trumpet which utter the divine word, and see the Mountain

smoking, and illuminated with the lightnings and the flames. So I lived, satisfied to know Thee, not only as the First cause, but also as Creator of the universe, nor only as the Final cause and preservation of the world, but as the Maker of everything in it—not only as a Sovereign ruling by general laws, but as a loving Lord, who disdains not to have exact acquaintance with every individual, and as a gracious Father intent on everything which conduces to the welfare and safety of all His creatures as being His children.

"If I know not the nature of matter, how shall I understand the Essence of God? I will own then that I know not what God is; but maintain that I know *that* He is—this being so clear, as to be the foundation of every possible proof and argument. This truth, not only Angels in heaven, and Men on earth, but the fiends also in hell acknowledge; the birds in air thank Him with their songs, for having created them; and the herds in their pastures, and the wild beasts in their woods, with their lowings, and various cries signify that they have some knowledge of the Deity: and the fishes in the depths of rivers, lakes, seas, seem in a manner to make harmony to the glory of God; even the plants

and trees and flowers, renewing themselves at the appointed season, reveal their knowledge, and celebrate the Providence of Him, who is the Maker and Preserver of every creature. How much more then must I acknowledge the Christian faith in all its particulars?"

"But it is time that I return to my original argument."

[There is a blank here in which he apparently must have spoken of the Duke, or rather of his accuser, and either of the punishment assigned him, or the charge brought against him.]

"But because I am resolved to take everything in good part, let him purge his conscience in the sight of God, and justify his action in the judgment of men, for I, as far as I am concerned, remain satisfied with him. An action may be just, and yet unjustly done, or by a wicked person and in a wicked spirit. But perhaps this question is superfluous, since it is untrue that my friend* was moved to work against me by any malicious intention. I would not grieve him by this discussion—that is

* He has a Sonnet in which he complains also of this friend's perfidy.

not my object. Nevertheless, to clear some of my actions from infamy; it is right to observe that things may be just, and yet be unjustly done.

"But when I perceived that I was accused by him, I seemed to perceive also, (unless I mistake) that in order to justify his accusations, steps were taken against me, neither just nor legitimate, nor usual. Wherefore I thought, if the means used to inculpate me were so extraordinary, that I might fairly contrive to free myself of them by extraordinary proceedings also, denying the truth, as I imagined that they were falsely charging me. And I spoke of this to His Highness, the Duke of Ferrara, my most loving and beloved lord, and with his leave I presented myself for examination*. In the examination, however, I suffered myself to be carried away, not only by my emotion, but also by my imagination: so that I affirmed several things, which I believed indeed, but knew not for certain whether they were, or were not true: and in particular I wished to raise a suspicion of iniquity against a person of the greatest excellency, of whom I had

* It does not appear which examination he speaks of, whether touching heresy, or his quarrel, or other accusations.

never seen any action which was not perfectly just.

"But if my conduct was unusual, the proceedings of the judge were most unusual also; and when, by the rareness of the case, he might easily have been excused from such proceedings, what excuse can he derive, either with God or with a judicious prince, for never having taken any steps to tranquillise me? Surely, if he still pretended to chastise me, he ought to have taken care that I should acquit myself of my penalty, without having to tremble for my life; or at all events he should not have prevented my departure, when I wished to take horse for Bologna. Nevertheless, since he is, as I hear, a man of good life and conduct, it may be concluded that he is moved by just and powerful motives to dislodge me. But if he will not agree that I should complain of him, let him at least allow me to bewail my misfortune, which if it could not take justice from the just, has yet taken foresight from the prudent, sincerity from the sincere, compassion from the compassionate, and has made a lie in the mouths of truthful men to be full of authority, and to receive full credence; while it has taken all credence from the truth which I uttered, and all

authority from my character and quality, which yet were worthy of some regard and consideration.

"The ancient heathens admitted of expiation. Among Christians, of whom religions compassion is a distinguishing characteristic, I know not why similar purgations should not be allowed of, although perhaps he remains sufficiently purged—* But I refuse not to receive that punishment. All that grieves me, is that unusual severity is shown toward me, and *new, unheard of chastisements* continually devised against me. And it grieves me, that they who should be, if not deliverers, yet at least comforters in my misery, should be the ministers of cruelty, and executioners of malice; and it seems hard to me† , ... and if there was anything of wantonness‡ in them, like darnel amid wheat, heaven knows it was my intention to remove it.

* Here is another blank. It is uncertain, as was noticed in the history, who this perfidious friend is.

† Probably, "that my letters should have been intercepted, desks broken open, papers examined and overlooked," or some such expressions would occupy this blank.

‡ This expression, "Rosini judges," alludes to the verses in which his attachment to one of royal rank is set forth in language grievous to discover.

"Nor ought those fresh errors, after my last departure from Ferrara, to be imputed to me, because, *he who wills that another should become mad,* ought not to complain if he, from despair of doing things impossible, and amidst the confusion of all things, and the agitation of a thousand hopes, and a thousand suspicions, cannot refrain or moderate his folly; and no criminal, I believe, was ever so tormented, no city ever so assaulted with artillery, as I have been both tormented and assaulted. Nor can it be said that I ever departed from my honourable proposal; but rather, that I have been forcibly withheld, and driven away.

* * * *

"I pass to the charge of unfaithfulness, to the Prince my lord; who, for the prudence of his State, the nobility of his blood, the splendour of his court, and still more, for all endowments, both of mind and body*; and for goodness and courtesy of nature, deserves to be served with all possible fidelity and love—and by me in particular; since he raised

* It should, perhaps, be observed that I have followed the later writers—Ranke, Sismondi, Rosini—for example, in the character assigned to the d'Este family. Other writers, especially those of older date, speak in far more favourable terms. Gibbon,

me from the darkness of my low estate, to light and reputation in his court,—gave me comfort instead of want; and made my works honourable

for instance, after mentioning three grievous crimes which stained the d'Este annals—the parricide, namely, of Obizo, by Azzo VIII, the incest and deaths of Parisina and Hugo, A.D. 1425, so well known through Byron's poem; the conspiracy, thirdly, of two illegitimate brothers, Julio and Ferdinand, against Alfonso I, their eldest brother and sovereign, in consequence of the former being blinded by the Cardinal, Hippolito, another legitimate brother, out of jealousy, and their subsequent imprisonment for life—continues thus:—"These dark shades in the annals of the House of d'Este, must not be excused by the example of the Italian tyrants, whose courts and families were perpetually defiled with lust and blood, with incest and parricide; who mingled the cruelty of savages with the refinements of a learned and polite age. But it may be fairly observed, that single acts of virtue and of vice, can seldom be weighed against each other; that it is far more easy to fall below, than to rise above, the common level of morality: that three or four guilty days have been found in a period of two hundred years, and that, in the general tenour of their lives, the Marquises d'Este were just, temperate, and humane; the friends of each other, and the fathers of their people."—*Antiquities of the House of Brunswick.*

It makes no difference to Tasso's history, as the pride and jealousy of honour in the d'Este family is unquestionable; and it was against these that he offended.

Ferrara ward durch seine Fürsten gross.

GOETHE, TORQ. TASSO.

by often hearing them, and distinguishing me who read them with every sort of favour. He counted me worthy of the honour of his table, and of his intimate society, neither did he ever refuse me any request which I made him; and lastly, in the beginning of my persecutions, he showed me the affection, not so much of a master, as of a father, or a brother—a rare affection in the minds of great men. How then can I excuse myself for having misbehaved towards so noble, and worthy, so courteous and gracious a lord, except by casting the blame on other men, and on the malignity of my fortune, and on necessity, that tyrannizes over men: while I not only excuse my will, but wholly acquit it, of even the least suspicion of offence.

"I will also say besides, that if I had ever entertained any thought of attempting anything against either his life, his government, or his honour, I should merit, not only common punishments, but even worse than Pharasis or Mezentius imagined for their victims. But in reality I never offended him, except by *some light words*, such as are often on the lips of dissatisfied courtiers, or by*

* This was probably his communication with the Court of the Medici, carried on through Scipio Gonzaga.

treating about a change of service, under the pressure of certain circumstances, which he can know from me, if he wishes, and in that way which is known to you, illustrious Gonzaga, and by which he could not, I believe, be offended. Those words also, of which I was guilty, might perhaps have been of importance, if they had not been spoken conditionally. Whereas, besides that they were uttered under the impulse of vehement and just indignation, they were clearly not spoken with any intention of executing them.

"I might at this point enter into a long history of all that has befallen me, and so manifest my good intention, and evil fortune: but I will not, for fear of blaming others. Nevertheless, I deny not that my Lord, who knew the secrets of my heart, was justly moved by some follies (leggerezze) of mine, and on the authority of very grave testimonies, to chastise me. But that chastisement, which his compassion, directed by the mercy of God, could not bear to inflict on me, has been inflicted on me by others, and in such a manner as to surpass the limits of punishment, and take the form and nature of revenge. The infliction of a pain may have these objects, purification, chastisement, vengeance. I

ask, therefore, if these Princes, who authorise my sufferings, desire to purify, or to chastise me, or to revenge themselves upon me. I desire purification: I refuse not chastisement: I only pray with all my heart, and cry to heaven and earth, that I may not be given up to revenge.

" As to purification, it should be directed to heal both my body and mind, which suffer equally from weakness and many disorders. I will not complain now of a heart worn with continual pain, a head always heavy and aching, sight much weakened, limbs withered and wasted. Passing all this over with a sigh, I will rather at length unfold the infirmities of my mind, and the longing which I have for the recovery of my honour. Pass we now to the purification effected by chastisement. This should doubtless be proportionable to the fault. If I have been sufficiently punished or not, I commit to the gracious consideration of those Princes, whose duty it is to judge me. And if I have scarcely been punished yet, surely confinement, banishment, exclusion from the royal apartments, might be enough, after the first pains inflicted on me, which have smitten me so sharply in my life, honour, goods; but if these do not satisfy them as

being ordinary punishments, and they desire novel torments, surely the being compelled to *watch and obey gestures like a mute or beast:* to be deprived of all knowledge of the world's affairs—cut off from action—cut off from all private society, and inter-friendship, cut off from all those objects which can change or please the taste, the sight, the hearing, would seem sufficient punishments, without adding to such afflictions, weakness, destitution, indignity, and deprivation of writing.

"I say then that the principal act, for which I am blamed, and which perhaps is the only true cause of my chastisement, ought not perhaps to be punished, as absolutely sinful, but as of a mixed character; as I did it not from choice, but from necessity, and yet not absolute necessity, but from fear now of death, now of the extremest disgrace, now of miserable and perpetual disquietude.

"I think also the words which I uttered, no less deserving of pardon, as spoken by a man, not only naturally passionate, but at that particular time in the most vehement passion.

"Again, if I am to be punished, it should not be in such a way as neither helps to maintain the majesty of law, or the honour of the prince, nor conduces to

the good of the state. To assign to any artizan as a punishment, that he should not exercise his art, is unheard of and monstrous. And I am prevented from writing. Who prevents you? you may ask. The want of an end, I reply—for nothing is done without an end—and if I am to gain nothing, no honour, no advantage by writing, really I am prevented from it.

"And now my mind is sluggish in thinking, my imagination idle in conceiving ideas, my senses refuse to minister the necessary images—my hand grows slothful in writing, my pen shrinks from its office, I feel freezing in body and soul, overwhelmed with stupor and lethargy.

"Give me therefore your intercession. I ask not for justification, only for forgiveness and mercy*."

* I need not say that this discourse, or letter (written, Tasso says, in haste and uncorrected), is very abrupt and enigmatical. It is remarkable that he never mentions the true cause of his imprisonment in explicit words, or even words which give the least idea of its true nature. He seems to avoid any such explanation carefully. This seems a strong confirmation of Rosini's opinion.

TO THE COUNT OF PALENO AT NAPLES.

FROM A SONNET.

Weary with cares and years my frame I bow;
And now my hair grows grey; my foot grows slow;
I muse of nothing, save the loss of all;
I live for nothing, save for death to call.
With begging, and with flatt'ring spent and worn,
I fear lest cruel fortune in her scorn
Swallow me quick; and pale I wax, and white,
As some hoar-stone on the cold Alpine height.

BEFORE CONFESSION OF SIN.

Father, to Thee I turn. With penitent brow
I weep that will, which gainst Thy will contended.
With the sharp sorrows, that my spirit plough,
I venge thee on myself who so offended.
Do thou forget! forgive! since trembling now
I dread thy wrath, above my sins suspended;
So shall the pangs and fears, wherein I move,
Inflame and change into Thy heavn'ly Love.

THE END.

LONDON:
Printed by Schulze and Co., 13, Poland Street.

00020319

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 06 February, 2016